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December 1917

The Black Cat

Clever Short Stories

Nuxated Iron to Make New Age of Beautiful Women and Vigorous Iron Men

Say Physicians—Quickly Puts Roses Into the Cheeks of Women and Most Astonishing Youthful Vitality Into the Veins of Men—It Often Increases the Strength and Endurance of Delicate, Nervous "Run Down" Folks 100 Per Cent in Two Weeks' Time.

Opinion of Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City

SINCE the remarkable discovery of organic iron, Nuxated Iron or "Fer Nuxate" as the French call it, has taken the country by storm, it is conservatively estimated that over three million people annually are taking it in this country alone. Most astonishing results are reported from its use by both physicians and laymen. So much so that doctors predict that we shall soon have a new age of far more beautiful, rosy-cheeked women and vigorous iron men.

Dr. Ferdinand King, a New York Physician and Medical Author, when interviewed on this subject, said: "There can be no vigorous iron men, without iron." Pallor means anæmia. Anæmia means iron deficiency. The skin of anæmic men and women is pale, the flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone; the brain fags and the memory fails and often they become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks.

"In the most common foods of America, the starches, sugars, table syrups, polished rice, white bread, soda crackers, biscuits, macaroni, spaghetti, tapioca, sago, farina, degerminated corn-meal, no longer is iron to be found. Refining processes have removed the iron of Mother Earth from these impoverished foods, and silly methods of home cookery, by throwing down the waste pipe the water in which vegetables are cooked, are responsible for another grave iron loss.

"Therefore, if you wish to preserve your youthful vim and vigor to a ripe old age, you must supply the iron deficiency in your food by using some form of organic iron, just as you would use salt when your food has not enough salt."

Dr. E. Sauer, a Boston physician who has studied both in this country and in great European medical institutions, said: "As I have said a hundred times over, organic iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If the people would only take Nuxated Iron when they feel weak or rundown, instead of dosing themselves with habit-forming drugs, stimulants and alcoholic beverages I am convinced that in this way they could ward off disease, preventing it becoming organic in thousands of cases and thereby the lives of thousands might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, kidney, liver, heart trouble and other dangerous maladies. The real and true cause which started their disease was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood.

"Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with a blood pressure of a boy of twenty and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact, a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret, he said, was taking iron—Nuxated Iron had filled him with renewed life. At thirty he was in bad health; at forty-six he was care worn and nearly all in. Now, at fifty, after taking Nuxated Iron, a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth.

"Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times a day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely rid themselves of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And

this, after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old form of reduced iron, iron acetate, or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children is, alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete and prizefighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray; while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron."

Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, visiting surgeon, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

NOTE—Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians in such a great variety of cases, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians both in Europe and America. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such a great confidence in nuxated iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron, and increase their strength 100 per cent or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

The Black Cat

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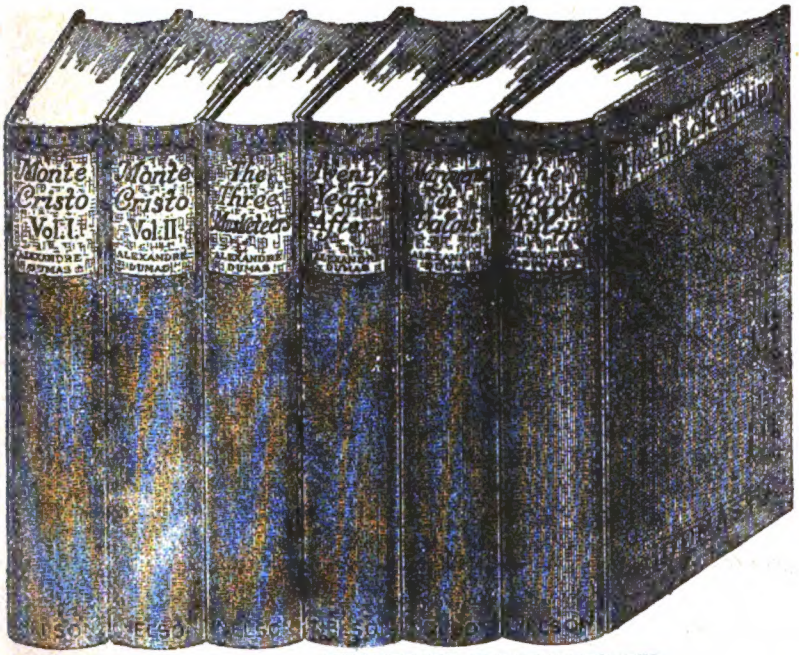

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THE LAW OF SALVAGE

BY FREDERICK J. JACKSON

A pound of flesh without one drop of blood is not a limitation set forth in the law of salvage. A ship owner learns this when a youth exacts approximately one hundred and twenty pounds of flesh and all that pertains thereto.

O the waterfront population of Eureka, Osten, owner and manager of the Osten Shipping Company, was known as "Skinflint" Osten.

The blossoming apple of his hard and lculating eye was his brown-haired, own-eyed, laughter-loving daughter, uriel. His mean old heart held a flame love for his motherless daughter, and r her alone.

But it happened that when Muriel deloped the habit of walking home from gh school each day with nineteen year l Norby Larson, her father placed his mber ten congress gaiter down with such nemence and pressure as to withhold for first time in her rather pampered and lulged life, something that Muriel want-

True, up to this point she had not nted him with any superlative degree of ire; but young Norby, with his smooth eks, frank blue eyes, upright yellow npadour and firm, almost fighting chin, s in demand by the other girls. This s a state of affairs not to be tolerated the unchecked pride of sweet sixteen, l Muriel had cooly annexed him as her alier.

Muriel, my dear," Osten one day hinted, wish you would not be seen on the street . that young Larson."

Why, father!" she exclaimed in sure.

He's really not in your class at all," reed Skinflint. "His parents have no ney, no prospects and not much posi-, and surely, my dear, it behooves you avoid his company."

s that the only reason? Why, daddy, you old silly!" she laughed in relief, "I don't care a snap for any of those things! And I'm not in love with him. I like him, of course, but I go with him because some of those old smarty-cats at school think they can have him all the time—and I'm just showing them they can't!"

Osten smiled dryly at these typically perverse feminine tactics.

"That's all very well; but I insist, that having shown them, as you term it, you cease to be seen with him. Everybody knows his father went broke, or next to it, when he tried to promote an oyster company to buck my concession on the Arcata Bay mud flats. He couldn't fight *me!* I don't want my daughter associating with his son. Do you understand? You must drop him!"

"Daddy, I think you're simply horrid!" Muriel flared. Then the tears came.

Finally, after blithely ignoring papa and his stern commandment, an indignant Muriel found herself shut up in a boarding school in the fashionable district of San Francisco. Skinflint Osten was using longshore methods in his domestic campaign.

When Norby graduated from high school, he packed some clothes into a canvas dunnage-bag, and got himself a job before the mast on a four-masted schooner running to Honolulu in the lumber trade. He infinitely preferred the sea to going to work at a slightly larger wage in a stuffy office, or in the logging woods. And he had another motive in going to sea. He wanted to learn the shipping business from the keel up.

A year later found things in much the same state, Muriel at the seminary, and Norby still a sailor.

While on a trip home, he called on the

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head of the Osten Shipping Company. With no preliminary sparring about the weather he struck out clear and to the point.

"Now see here, Mr. Osten, why do you object to me?" He eyed Osten calmly, as though daring him to state a logical reason.

Skinflint glared at Norby for a moment in surprise; he gurgled twice, and then boiled over.

"Say, you've got the infernal gall of a warehouse rat, asking me a question like that!" he roared. "Why do I object to you? Why, that girl is *half* of my life—half of my life, do you understand; and who are you, a penniless bird of passage, to want to take her away from me? When Muriel marries, it will be a man who is and has—a man I can approve of!"

"A *man* you'd approve of?" said Norby mildly. "Huh! And Muriel is *half* of your life! I'll make her *all* of mine when I get a start. Goodbye!"

Norby returned to San Francisco and signed as second mate on the old *Blanche Bennett*, a three-masted bark, which had seen its best days long before in the Hongkong-Boston tea route, and was now spending its declining days as a guano ship running to an island near the international date line, where it crossed the 13th parallel of north latitude.

This island, a mere isolated patch of rock, was out of the track of ships, and in a region which contained several uncharted islets and reefs, both coral and volcanic. A Swede trader, named Bjorkman, had discovered it while making a run in a small trading schooner from the Marshall Islands to Honolulu during the *Kona* season, and had astutely kept his discovery to himself, after seeing the centuries-old deposits of guano which had settled almost to the hardness of rock. He had picked up the *Blanche Bennett*, and was making regular trips to San Francisco with a quality of rock which always netted him the cream of the market.

The bark arrived at Bjorkman Island and the work of loading began.

A narrow railroad, the rails of strap-iron spiked to timbers, ran from a tiny pier to where the deposits were being worked. The hard, limestone-like stuff was handled in chunks, being loaded by pick and shovel into large ballast baskets standing on small cars. These cars were run by gravity to the pier, where the baskets, which held a ton each, were swung by a derrick into a lifeboat and taken one by one out to where the bark lay at anchor. From the boat the baskets were hoisted by the cargo winch to the end of the main yard, swung inboard on a burton, and tripped into the hold.

This pick and shovel method was extremely slow at best. Three weeks passed and the *Blanche Bennett* had something over 600 tons in her hold when the barometer began to drop steadily until it hovered below 29.50, a sure portend of southwesterly weather, corroborated by a long greasy ground-swell setting in from that direction. Light, feathery plumes of cirrus clouds began to radiate from a distant point beyond the horizon, the sky grew hazy with a thin, fibrous veil, a halo formed around the sun, the air became hot, heavy and moist. Towards sunset the veiled sky showed rich and vivid tints of gorgeous red and violet.

Even Norby, as yet inexperienced in the vagaries of equatorial weather, felt that something was in the air.

After a last anxious look at the barometer, Captain Bjorkman came on deck.

"Get the men and boat aboard, Mr. Larson," he ordered. "Stow everything, and batten the hatches. We'll send down the royal and upper ga'nsail yards too. We're in for a snorting kona tonight, and we'd better get all the weight off the sticks that we can—they're none too good." He turned and bellowed to the mate.

"Better heave her short, Mr. Shelldrake, then get your top-hamper down. We'll have to run for it!"

"We'll sail for Frisco," he continued to Norby. "The hold is nearly full, and it wouldn't be worth the time we'd waste beating back here. We can make a good leg to the north'ard in the next day or two. The old girl is none too staunch, and she rides easier when scudding—and she'll sure have a run ahead of her by the look of that sky!"

It was three days later, after broaching

o in a mountainous sea-way and rolling er ancient sticks over the side, that the *Blanche Bennett* was riding out a nasty ea with her lost spars floating to windrard and acting as a sea anchor in holdng her head up.

Deep into each driving flood the old ulk plunged to lose her bow in a smother f foam. Sluggishly, laboriously, far too lowly, she recovered from each dive, for he battering of the spars alongside had pened up the seams before the shrouds ould be axed to allow them to drift off o windward. The well showed six feet espite the frantic efforts of the men at he pumps.

Her doom was sealed.

After pouring oil from the bows, hey managed to get the boats over the ail. The first mate, Mr. Shelldrup, seting out with five men in a fourteen foot linghy; while Captain Bjorkman, Norby nd the remainder of the crew, fourteen n all, went in an eighteen foot whaleboat. Well provisioned were both boats, but in ach there was only a five gallon breaker f water.

It was four weeks later that the U. S. eographical survey ship, *Albatross*, workng on the rocks and shoals to the westward of Hawaii, picked up the whaleboat wherein lay but two men in whom a dim park of life still remained.

One of the two was Norby. The other was a hardy young Scotchman from the forecastle, Sandy Burns by name.

Youth will ever be served. These two ad survived the incredible hardships which ad killed the older men in the boat. With heir shrunken limbs, dirty, emaciated feaures, black and swollen tongues protrudng from cracked lips, and limbs chafed aw from salt-soaked clothing, they were sight that caused even the calloused govrnment surgeon to shake his head in pity.

The other, and smaller boat in charge of he first mate, disappeared completely; was ever heard from at all.

The *Albatross* called at Honolulu, and hen steamed for San Francisco, with Norby and his shipmate still guests of the government. The elastic vitality of youth rebounded quickly under proper treatment, and they had lost most of their scarecrow look when they neared the Golden Gate.

"Well, Sandy, going to ship again soon?" inquired Norby, as they leaned over the rail watching the nearing blue haze of mountains which was the coastline of California.

"That I am na'!" emphatically declared Sandy. "I'll gang to the country and hoe pratties and milk coos for a time."

"There's a lot of good guano on that island, Sandy. Want to try for it with me?"

"That I do na'! Guano!" Sandy spat as though to remove the offending word from his mouth, then continued, "How could ye find the island? I ken it is na' charted."

"I have the latitude, and it's only two miles from the international date line. Saturday on the island, and two miles away it's Sunday. Couldn't help but find it."

Sandy cogitated for a moment.

"Na' for this Scot!" he finally declared. "Ye're welcome to ut all as fur as I am concerned," and Sandy turned away.

In San Francisco Norby found that Muriel had returned north, so he went to Eureka to spend a month at home while he recuperated.

One day Norby strolled to the waterfront and took a seat on the stringpiece of a dock. Across the narrow channel a couple of "baldheaded" schooners lay at anchor at the mud flats adjacent to Indian Island. Norby reflected as he gazed across at them.

Finally he made a call upon their owner, one Wilbur Corson, a lumberman, who had laid the schooners up because of their inability to compete profitably under present lumber rates with steam-schooners in the coastwise run.

"See here, Mr. Corson," Norby began, "you've got a couple of old schooners rotting to pieces over on the flats. Do you ever expect to do anything with them?"

At this direct attack, Corson leaned far back in his swivel office chair, and took a second look at Norby through half-closed eyes. Finally he grinned.

"Well, young man, it wouldn't be exactly good business policy for me to admit I was stuck with them, would it?"

"No-o," admitted Norby with an answer-

ing grin, "but I *know* you are just the same!"

"Well, what about it? What's on your mind?"

Thereupon, Norby told of the guano island to which no claim was laid, now that Bjorkman was dead.

Corson whistled through his teeth in surprise.

"So you're the Larson who was second mate on the *Blanche Bennett*. I read about your rescue. How did you come to be second mate? Seems you're a bit young."

"I'm an able seaman. I have a little 'savvy' and no license is required to ship as second mate on a sailing vessel."

"And now you want that guano?"

"Yes, if I had a schooner I'd go down and clean that island to bed rock. There's only a couple of cargoes left."

"Well," said Corson after a little thought, "I can think of no one who has a better right to the rest of it than you. Those days without water ought to pay for most anything.

"Between you and me, those schooners are a devil of a liability, for I find it impossible to sell them, and I have been keeping their paint and rigging in first-class shape and keeping a watchman aboard. If I let you have a schooner, can you go it alone?"

"I think so. I have eight hundred dollars in the bank. That'll go a long ways for provisions and what crew I'll need. I'll take my dad in on it; he'll put up the rest. I won't have to dry-dock the schooner for a while. There's a spring tide tomorrow, nearly seven feet, and I could take the schooner over the peninsula at high tide and haul her up broadside. At low tide, with purchases from her mastheads to those big trees ashore, I could careen her till the keel shows. I'd have a few men to scrape the barnacles and weeds from her bottom, burn out the teredo holes with a gasoline blow torch, and plug them up. I'd touch up the worst spots with a little tar or copper paint. The next day I'd repeat on the other side."

"Fine!" commended Corson, nodding approval. "Now see here, boy, I'll make you a liberal proposition. You can take the *Bettina;* she's in better shape, and has two suits of sails in her lazarette. Go after that guano. If you make good, I'll only ask you to repay me what I've paid out for dry dock, watchman, paint and incidentals since she's been laid up.

"On the other hand if through any mischance you can't get it—why, you don't owe me a cent. When you get the *Bettina* scraped, slide around to the ballast wharf and get about thirty tons of rock in her hold. Spread it out along the keelson. Then haul around to my mill, and I'll give you lumber for dunnage. But say, what are you going to do for sacks?"

"Don't need any for this guano. They handle it like rock ballast. I'll line the hold with one-inch 'refuse' if you want me to. Then there wouldn't be the slightest odor left after discharging cargo."

Norby went home and outlined his plans at length to his father. "I'll be second mate. You get your old ticket renewed and sign on as mate. We'll only need a skipper then, besides the crew," he concluded.

"I know the very man!" exclaimed his father. "Old Johnnie Bowles has certificates for both sail and steam, and he's been keeping them renewed through force of habit. He'll be tickled stiff to get a chance to sneak away from his wife for a few months. She's a tartar and has got him buffaloed, poor old duck. She's astraddle of his neck all the time. He doesn't dare to even breathe freely when she's around."

"All right. You see him. I'm on my way to the sailor's union to ship a crew. I'll get four men, then I'll have a gasoline tug snake the schooner off the flat. On our way down we can call at Honolulu for a half a dozen husky dollar-a-day Kanakas to shovel guano on the island. The crew will work aboard stowing it."

A week later saw the *Bettina Corson* being towed over Humboldt Bar, outward bound for Bjorkman Island. Prayers for success followed the schooner over the rim of the horizon, for Muriel Osten had promised to marry Norby in spite of her father, if the expedition were successful.

But, unfortunately, in a stormy scene she

unwisely informed her parent to this effect.

Two days after the departure, Sandy Burns, tired of digging potatoes, and with the call of the sea once more in his veins, arrived in Eureka on a steam-schooner in search of Norby. When he heard that Norby had departed in a schooner which had cleared mysteriously for an indefinite port, with the illogical reasoning of some men, Sandy waxed exceedingly wrathful, declaring that he was being cheated of his rightful share of the guano.

"Why don't you see Skinflint Osten?" was the suggestion of a sympathetic friend to whom he had confided his troubles.

Sandy went to Osten with his tale of the guano isle.

Osten rubbed his puffy forefinger slowly up and down the side of his swollen nose as he listened. The look of a hawk was in Osten's greedy, pig-like eyes. No wonder they glistened, for in richness of nitrogen and phosphoric acid Bjorkman's guano was famed as being almost equal to the "bllod-meal" variety, and had gone to over sixty dollars a ton.

"See here, what's-your-name—Burns, do you know where this island is?"

"Sure I do. It's twa miles from the date line—one hundred and eighty degrees east or west. South of fifteen or sixteen north, I ken. I ken it canna' be missed if the longitude be run doon from the latitude of Honolulu. 'Tis a wee bit nearer the line than that!"

The gleam had intensified in Osten's eyes.

"Sure of that longitude?" he questioned sharply.

Sandy emphatically declared his certainty.

"How much guano is there? How do they load it? Do they sack it? Do they have to let it dry?" he barked in rapid succession.

Sandy fully explained the situation.

"Well, how does it lie? Among the rocks or in the open?"

"Both. Most of ut could be worked like a quarry all over the island—four, five, six feet and even deeper."

"How many days for a sailing vessel to get there?"

"Thur-ty-nine days the trip I made, but they make it in twenty-five sometimes."

Osten's shrewd brain was working fast. When Sandy mentioned Larson, the name acted as a spur. The old man reached his decision, but appeared to be pondering deeply. He shook his head slowly.

"I'm sorry, Burns, but I'm afraid I can't see my way to go into this proposition under the circumstances." He pursed his lips, and shook his bullet head again as though in sincere regret. "You see, the *Bettina Corson* is a bit of a clipper, very fast, and she's had too much start. It would take another week to get a sailing vessel ready, so I won't bother with it at all!" He arose and opened the door, and bowed the disappointed Scotchman out of the office.

Barely had Burns departed, when Osten's severe features relaxed into a wicked grin. He rang for a messenger, and then wrote a telegram:

"Swain & Hoyt,
San Francisco.
Cancel S. S. Tampico. Send here on arrival.

Osten."

When the *Tampico,* a 3,000 ton steel freighter owned by Osten, arrived at Eureka four days later, she took on coal and water for a long voyage. A score of one-ton ballast baskets went down her fore-hatch; a steam shovel, which had been diking some marsh land in reclamation work, was hoisted over her side and stowed on deck, together with a small lighter and a gasoline launch. The *Tampico* crossed the entrance, swung around the bell buoy outside the bar, and laid a course to the southwest on the track of the *Bettina Corson.*

There is a deadly certainty about a steam vessel in comparison with a wind-jammer, and fourteen days later, the *Tampico* dropped her anchor a cable's length off the wharf on Bjorkman Island.

The lighter was swung outboard on two heavily shored cargo-booms, and lowered into the water, followed shortly by the launch. The steam shovel was loaded onto the lighter, and towed ashore by the motor boat. Two hours later the shovel was merrily puffing away, dumping guano into the baskets on the cars at a rate that it had never been loaded before.

Osten's method was efficiency personified,

and in less than a week the steam paddy had cleaned up all it could reach, and the pick and shovel men were scooping the rest of the treasure from around the rocks. Some 1,800 tons were beneath the hatches, and the *Tampico* was preparing to leave the gutted island, when the *Bettina Corson* appeared above the eastern horizon.

The schooner anchored in deeper water outside the steamer, and Norby, his brain almost numbed with amazement at finding Osten's steamer there ahead of him, took a boat and rowed ashore. Osten, just about to go aboard the steamer, met him on the wharf.

"Well, young man, I reckon I sort of pulled up your tent pegs on a windy night," he ventured, with a tolerant, amused smile that made Norby grit his teeth.

"Damn you, Osten, that was my guano you stole!"

"Ye-es! Well what are you going to do about it?"

Norby glanced around at the bare half-mile expanse of rock, the burial ground of his hopes and ambitions.

"I'll beat it to Honolulu and cable to the coast to have your steamer libeled the minute she gets into port. I'll slap a plaster on the cargo."

Osten smiled with the easy complacency of the man who is holding four aces.

"Go ahead," he invited. "I had just as much right to it as you did. I grabbed it ahead of you, and in this case possession happens to be the whole law. You ain't got a leg to stand on. Did you think I was going to stand around twiddling my thumbs while Muriel married you? Not on your two-bit tintype! It was business combined with pleasure this trip, and it certainly paid expenses!" He stepped into the launch, leaving a heartsick and crushed Norby standing forlornly on the pier.

The *Tampico* loaded everything aboard, and sailed that evening. There was nothing for the schooner to do but follow suit, and she started on a long tack to the northward in her beat to Honolulu against the northeast trade.

Then the wind hauled around to north-by-east. The schooner tacked, heading due east.

"Now, dad, don't take it so hard," Norby urged. "When we slip into Honolulu to put the Kanakas ashore, we'll pick up a sugar cargo for Frisco. We'll more than make expenses out of the trip, anyhow."

With the freshening northerly breeze six points off her bow the schooner romped along like a yacht. One morning just after sunrise, on Norby's watch on deck, when some three hundred miles from Honolulu, a steamer was sighted off the port bow. It was out of the usual track of steamships, and appeared to have no steerage-way on, so from curiosity, Norby stepped below for his binoculars.

"The Tampico!" he ejaculated excitedly; "and flying a distress signal!" He called his father and Captain Bowles on deck.

"It's Osten's steamer. There goes his signal letters and house flag—a black 'O' on a white field; but I knew her hull the minute I saw her through the glasses."

Captain Bowles shot the *Bettina Corson* within hail of the steamer, and hove to.

"Tampico, ahoy!" he bellowed in his stentorian bass, which could shame a fog horn. "What's the trouble?"

The *Tampico's* captain replied through a megaphone.

"Broken tailshaft! Beyond repair!" was his laconic tale.

"We're going after a towboat," returned Bowles. "You might rig a sea anchor to lessen your drift!"

It was a jubilant trio who gathered on the poop of the schooner when once more under way.

"My eye, but we got Osten in a hole!" exulted Johnnie Bowles. "That steamer and cargo are worth not a cent less than three hundred thousand dollars, and with the fix she's in, with the worst sort of luck in the courts, we couldn't get less than half. Two-thirds would be about right."

"How's that?" inquired Norby. "Sometimes they only get towing rates for a salvage job."

"Not this time! Not this time! If we can get a towboat and bring the *Tampico* into Honolulu, that'll be a real case of salvage. My God! That steamer ain't got no more show than a fat dog at a Kanaka *luau.* No wireless aboard, and look where

she is—clear out of the steamer lanes. We're close to Honolulu, but the Manila and Hongkong boats pass at least a hundred miles to the north'ard, and the liners to Apia or Australia won't be a bit less than that distance to the east. If *we* don't get her, she'll drift clear down the path of the trade to the Marshalls and knock her bottom out on some reef as like as not. We'll establish all that in court, and Skinflint will have to sweat blood. My eye, but we got him stranded high, dry and staked out!"

"But if a Honolulu towboat takes her in, then her captain claims the salvage. We get left."

"Do we? Not on the locks of Samson! We'll get a towboat under the agreement that I'm in command when she clears, and when she slips a line aboard the *Tampico*. The salvage money will be all yours, boy. You might let me have a thousand dollars or so to square me with the wife when I get back. That's all I want. I'll get all my fun out of soaking Osten. I've been laying for him all my life. Now, I'll just shoot the *Tampico's* position, and reckon probable drift."

The morning of the second day following, the schooner dropped her mud hook between the beach and the whistling buoy outside Honolulu. The search for a towboat began without delay. Johnnie Bowles was in his natural element as a sea lawyer, and by astutely playing off a charter-seeking, inter-island freighter against a tug, he succeeded in getting a charter under day rates, protected by an iron-clad guarantee.

Bowles displaced the towboat captain in command—per the agreement—the erstwhile captain accompanying them, but only in the advisory capacity of pilot—and on the evening of the next day, after a rapid run, they located their drifting prize. They put a sixteen-inch Manila hawser aboard, and started back for Honolulu. It was a four day tow against the trade before they arrived in port.

Larson, senior, had been left in command of the schooner, and had hauled the *Bettina* into the inner harbor. Norby made his way aboard at once.

"Dad," he said, below in the cabin, as he started cramming some clean shirts into a suitcase, "Osten whipsawed you once. Here's your chance to take a chunk out of his hide. Take Bowles's advice, and don't settle out of court for less than fifty percent. The *Alameda* leaves for Frisco in about fifteen minutes, and I'm going on her!" Norby snapped the suitcase shut.

"Frisco on the *Alameda?* What for?" queried his father.

"I'm going to Eureka. I have a little business to settle in connection with this salvage deal, and I can do it better while Osten is here in Honolulu. And, oh yes, give me a blank check on your bank. That'll be best. I don't know how much I'll be needing."

"But what the—"

"Ask Johnnie for the details. And hurry, dad, please, with that check. I can only make that steamer by the skin of my teeth. Here's pen and ink. Hurry!"

"All right, son!" Larson grinned with sudden understanding, as he placed his signature on the check. "If you want that steamer you'll have to hustle lively."

Ten days later Osten was still in Honolulu fuming over the way he was being harpooned in the matter of the disastrous *Tampico* salvage suit.

A cable from San Francisco arrived for him, charges collect.

"Ha!" he thought with elation, as he paid the heavy charges. "From my San Francisco attorneys!" Tearing it open, he read:

"Osten, S. S. Tampico,
Honolulu.

Law of salvage gives me more than half. Consider I saved your life. Have collected accordingly. Muriel sends love.

Your son-in-law,
NORBY."

The word that Osten uttered with considerable emphasis is not to be found in the dictionary. He tore the message into shreds. As he stalked back towards the waterfront his lips continued to move, but not in prayer.

As he walked he became aware of something in his hand. Curiously he looked at it. It was the yellow cable envelope. As he turned it over, the words "Collect $7.75" met his eye.

THE GOLDEN ADVENTURE

BY CHARLES FULTON OURSLER

A patient in an emergency ward, whose chart indicates that he is not expected to live, steals out of the hospital on Christmas Eve to exchange a bag of gold for a halo.

IN the blood of the Binns family there was fight—and failure. Airy Binns had fought all his life and lost. When a boy he fought against school ma'ams and lost an education. In manhood, he fought against work and lost decency. When he grew old, he fought against everything and everybody crossing his twisted pathway and lost again. Airy Binns was a fighter, but he was also a loser.

Bitterly enough he realized this, as he staggered down the edge of Albemarle Street, late one bleak afternoon, with the shrill tide of Misery Flats rising to his ears. He muttered about it as he felt his legs twitching; he choked on it as he pitched forward into the gutter.

But that was not the end of Airy Binns. Some of the squat children, who play queer, old-world games of hide and seek under the wheels of the carts that clatter through Misery Flats, found him. They pointed at him with derisive little fingers, laughed at him with their dirty little mouths, and stared at him with impudent eyes. They even fingered his preposterous clothes, and one of them took his hat, which had no crown, and fitted it over her tangled mop of gold. Another little one, prettiest among them all, then called the policeman who struts imposingly through the Flats.

Meanwhile Airy Binns was better off than he had ever been in his life. He was as unconscious of what was going on around him as the drunken tombstones in the ancient burial ground near where he had fallen.

It was a very long time before he knew he was still alive. His first sensation was of riding in a farm wagon over a rough road. Then he felt that someone was shaking the life out of him. In feeble protest, he opened his eyes and saw a horrid face.

A bearded man with long, gray locks tangled about his ears was bending over his bed and shaking him. He was clad only in a night shirt.

"Can ya hyere me, mate?" he whispered hoarsely.

Airy shook his bandaged head in weak assent. He felt quite peaceful,—a new sensation for one who either felt the racing of rum in his head or the clutch of hunger in his stomach.

"Then listen quick," urged the bearded stranger, glancing down the long, low-lighted room, as if in terror. "Yer in a charity hospital. Ya get me? Ya fell down and busted yer top. Well, ya ain't gonna live—ya gonna die! I hyeard the doctors saying so."

Airy shifted uncomfortably. It was the first time he had looked upon death. And this was a bad time to begin.

The bearded man gave him no time to answer. He pointed far down the hall to the doorway. Airy's eyes followed the man's yellow, knotted finger and saw two crouched old men, nodding in slumber.

"Old Peter and Paul we calls 'em," whispered the bearded man. "They ain't got nothin' to do but wait for us to die. They expect ya to go off tonight. I hyeard 'em say so. I'm likely to go most any time,—if I move around too much my heart'll stop goin'. But Peter and Paul ain't nothin' to us, hyere or hyereafter. What we gotta be thinkin' about is—*Gawd!*"

That name moved Airy strangely,—the name his lips had so often defiled.

He cast an appealing glance at the man

with the beard, standing there by his bed.

"And the preachers that come hyere ain't no good," the stranger went on sourly. "All mouth, full of bull. It's *works,* mate. And we ain't got 'em!"

He turned and stumbled over to his cot, close to Airy. From under his pillow, he brought forth a greasy bag, stuffed to the mouth and tied with a string twisted into amazing knots.

"I can't move much and live," he chattered on. "Ya've got a little more strength and a little less time. Only tonight, mate. If ya don't want hell-fire and the devil's pitchfork through yer rotten ribs, ya've got to get busy and so have I. Here's gold, mate. Get outen that bed; sneak out while old Peter and Paul are asleep. Git outen hyere and do some good with this money before the devil gits us both. Listen to me, fer Gawd's sake. I give ya this gold,—that's *my* work. When He asks me up yonder what I ever did, besides steal yaller gals for the East Side when I was over the sea, I'll tell Him I give ya this money. That let's me out. Quick mate! Yer clothes are hyere. There's a windy; git outen that to the fire-ladder thing and run across the fields to town. Do something good with this gold tonight, or Gawd help us both!"

The bearded man had watched the changing eyes of Airy. He saw the frightened sick man try to raise himself on his elbows and fall groaning back again.

"Ya've *got* to do it," rasped the stranger desperately, as he pressed the bag of gold into Airy's hands. "Wait!"

With prodigious care he raised himself on his huge brown toes, and stole like a ghost in his nightgown, down the corridor, where the lowered gas flames, tortured by a breeze, threw his gaunt shadow into fearful shapes. He reached the side of the guardians of the door, fast in their dotard dreams. His blazing eyes studied their wrinkled faces and were satisfied. He slipped one great hand into a bulging pocket of Peter's coat and drew forth a bottle. With this held tightly, he scurried back to Airy's bed.

"Drink this!" he commanded, and poured half its contents down the parched throat of the man for whom death was ready but who was not ready for death. The stranger would have withdrawn the bottle, but with new vigor, Airy grabbed it and drained it to the last.

Presently, a shaking figure, gaunt and hideous, stood beneath the stars. Black and sullen, the landscape stretched away, far down to a group of twinkling town lights. To the ears of the fugitive came the sound of many bells, and once he saw a rocket.

The wind whipped new courage into him and the cold made him hasten. Unsteady of foot, but with high purpose for once in his heart, he floundered down the hillside and reached the road. The fighter was in his last battle, and only God knew what was waiting for him if he lost.

The distant clamor of the bells, the cold night air, impressed the pilgrim. As he staggered on, queer phantasms, old memories came to him. A star that seemed fixed over a ghostly spire brought a leer to his lips and a pain to his throat.

"There was three of 'em, wasn't they?" he ruminated. "Three wise guys from the East, bound for—some place!"

It is hard for men like Airy to understand much, if it is not just beneath their bloated noses. Airy didn't understand, but he felt, somehow, that the wise men from the East and he had something now in common.

This point in his vagrant thoughts found him tumbling up against a fence from sheer weakness. As he clung to the shaking rail, he saw a woman, wrapped round with a shawl, plodding on in the gloom. To the fence he clung and watched her, as she came on toward him.

Suddenly she darted to the other side of the road and quickened her steps,—she had seen him. But Airy was a fighter. Now he was fighting his way against death to win one good action for his record, so he raised his voice and found he had power still to call.

"Come here, lady!" he croaked. "I got somethin' fer you."

He raised his bag of coins above his head and staggered after the woman. Her screams broke on the night silence as she

saw him coming after her. But there was no one nearby to hear, and the bells kept her cries from the town people.

She picked up a stone and hurled it at her pursuer. Her arm was strong and her aim was good,—so sure that the stone hissed by Airy's head and tore his ear, and the blood came. Airy turned his face toward the town again, and another stone rattled at his heels.

At first he did not understand. He cursed the woman for a fool, and rubbed his ear. Then, feeling ill once more, he pulled himself together laboriously and trudged on.

"She could have had this money," he reflected, "and I bet she needed it,—but damnation, *I* see! She was afraid of me!"

Suddenly Airy realized the truth. Barroom memories; memories of the fierce, menacing face that had frowned at him from the bar mirrors of Misery Flats. This was he; this was Airy Binns. Small wonder she had stoned him.

Above the spire, the star still glowed, just at the edge of the town. And the bells, too, were still tolling, as if the sextons in all the churches were gone mad, and were trying to out-do each other at the ropes. The star and the bells once more warmed the heart of the lonely man,—they seemed beckoning, calling him from the road.

He trudged toward the edge of the town and into its streets, where the bells were clanging in deafening concert, and the people were going up and down gayly, as if it were some great occasion. In a few moments, Airy was a part of the throng; but all who passed him kept as far away as possible. Even the Salvation Army women drew back their tambourines and looked the other way when they saw him coming.

Forward, and then toward the gutter and back again they pushed him. He was in everybody's way. Without the will to resist, he let himself be caught in the current. It carried him in eddying whirls to many places and finally to a dark recess in a huge building off the seething thoroughfare.

"It must be Christmas!" muttered Airy.

Dully he let his gaze settle out on the pavement, but only for a moment. Something small and soft and cold had touched the palsied hand.

She was a little girl, not too well wrapped up. Her face was pale, but wistful and tender. Her childish stare went straight through his ragged shirt, straight to the tatters of his worn-out soul.

"Say! Ain't you supposed to be a dead one?" she ventured.

"No! No!" shuddered Airy. In terror at the thought, his shaking fingers closed around the little hand. "Don't I look alive?"

"Ye-ah!" she answered simply, "but I seen you when you *was* dead."

Airy's stare was uncomprehending.

"You fell down near our house in Mizry Flats," she explained. "Yes, you did, and I called the cop. Gee, you was a dead one then, all right. Maybe you're a ghost!"

In anguish, Airy held up his hand for her to stop.

"What do you want, anyhow?" he asked wearily.

"I want some poor guy," she answered briskly. "And you look the part. You see, it's this way. My maw and my daddy ain't got no coin, and course *I* know there ain't no Santy Claus. If there was, I wouldn't be here. But my six little brothers and sisters b'lieve there is, and it looks like they're gonna git a bum Christmas. But that ain't gonna faze me none,—I got a hunch! Miss Lucy, up at the Sunday school where I goes, give me a hunch all right.

"Miss Lucy says if we give a whole lot away, we gits a whole lot more back. Gawd Jesus told her. And Gawd Jesus told her a little kid can do more'n the big ones. A litkid shall lead'm; he told her so. Are you listening to me, dead man?"

Airy signified his close attention.

"Well, I got ten cents, see? I found it on the stone steps of the Jew church on Fleet Street. I want to give that ten cents to somebody 'at needs it. Then I'll git a whole lot more back, maybe,—if Gawd Jesus gits wise to what I done! Say, dead man, don't *you* need ten cents?"

But Airy couldn't answer. He couldn't

open his tired old lips, they were quivering so. He could scarcely think,—for ideas were flooding into his mind and their glory bewildered him.

"Wait a minute, kid," he begged huskily. "Wait a minute!"

His grip tightened on her little hand, and she squeezed back comfortingly.

"All right, dead man," she said. "You know, I like you."

He brightened immeasurably then. It all became so clear.

"Look here, kid!" he began with a feeble attempt at drollery. "Did you know I was a magician?"

"A magician?"

"Um. A real magician,—a feller what can do tricks. Lemn.e see that dime."

She held up her other hand and the bit of silver gleamed like a baby star in her thin little fingers. He regarded it with his shaggy head to one side, quizzically.

"It's gotta be a good dime," he wheezed.

She held it nearer to him and he blinked.

"Bite it!" she defied.

Furtively he glanced down at her. She was regarding his face with a curious interest, in which there was mixed pity and infinite faith. She did not notice his other hand, with the bag of gold, as he slipped it behind him guiltily.

"I *gotta* bite it, I guess. It ain't that I misdoubt you," he apologized, "but little girls don't know about them things!"

He held out his hand and she placed the dime on his palm. He clutched both her hand and the coin, shut his eyes and bending low he kissed her baby fingers.

"Now," he commanded, in a singular treble, unlike the voice she had heard before. "Now for the trick, little kid. You know I ain't got nuthin' but these old rags and the dime you give me. Shut yer eyes and kneel down like yer Miss Lucy told you to. And kid,—say a good word for me, will you."

She dropped down on her knees, but didn't let go of his hand. She shut her little eyes, laid her face against his hand, and whispered things he couldn't hear.

Stealthily he brought forth his bag of gold and held it over her head. He glowed with a warming peace, and there dropped away from him all bitterness.

"Look kid!" he sobbed. "Gawd Jesus heard you. Look!"

He pressed the clinking bag into her hands, as she opened wondering eyes. He tore the knots away and spread out the mouth of it so that the she could see the bright gold coins. He watched her delight and suddenly hugged her tighter as he heard her crow with glee.

Slowly he set her down upon her feet and stroked her hair.

"Go home, now, kid!" he cried. "Go home quick and show that to yer daddy and yer ma. And say," he choked, "don't forget yer dead man."

Impulsively, she reached up to his face and kissed him. Then she was off.

Up the street she raced until she was at the edge of the crowd. Then she turned and waved her hand, but there was no response. In the shadow behind was only a crumpled form, gripping a wonderful ten cent piece.

In his last fight, Airy had won.

For January: THE ELOPEMENT OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR *by Eric Collin.* After reading it, you will agree with the reporter in the story, who thinks he detects a strong odor of "free advertising," but finally says: "This is a good story after all. What are the details of this affair?"

THE PRINCE OF PRICE CUTTERS

BY R. N. WALL

P. T. Barnum's vital statistics on the birth rate of gullible persons may still be regarded as authoritative despite the Birth Control movement. While this story presents a case in point, it also shows that there is an antidote for every con game.

ANDREW Grantham, of the Budd Grocery Company, had just finished his morning dictation when the office boy ushered in a caller.

"This is Mr. Barnes, from Winslow, North Carolina, Mr. Grantham," the boy explained.

Grantham arose. His well-trained mind immediately recalled the information that trickled in to him from the territory that his salesmen covered.

"Winslow,—" his thoughts ran as he cordially shook hands with Mr. Barnes,—"we need trade there,—tobacco town,—eight or ten thousand population,—sell the Howard Grocery Company,—Smith & Seigel,—have tried to sell Barnes for a long time,—never could land him." Aloud, he was saying:—"Your name is quite familiar to me, Mr. Barnes. I think that Jenkins, our salesman for your part of the state, has called on you several times."

"I disremember," drawled the visitor. "So many of the boys come in,—I know their faces but I don't always recollect their names. I was in town and I thought I'd drop in and look your line over."

He smiled pleasantly. He was a middle-aged, awkward-looking little man, with a plastic, smooth-shaven face, and a loose, humorous mouth. Everything about him was commonplace save his shrewd, sharp, gray eyes. He was chewing tobacco, and he wore a badly-fitting suit of ready-made gray clothes. Grantham had seen hundreds of small town merchants of the same type.

"I'm mighty glad you came in," the manager declared. "Sit down. How are things in Winslow? Have a smoke on me."

He passed over a box of cigars. The visitor clumsily chose one and lighted it without removing the gaudy band. They chatted for a few moments about crops and conditions.

Then Grantham asked:

"Well, what can we do for you, Mr. Barnes?"

"Didn't know but I might buy a little bill if you all wa'n't too steep and you could make the terms right."

"I'm sure we can make them to suit you, Mr. Barnes," Grantham promised heartily. "How about September terms? Your tobacco sales will be on then?"

"There'll be some breaks coming on the floor by September fifteenth; that'll be all right, I reckon. What you all getting for sugar, now?"

"Sugar's up a little, you know," Grantham smiled. "We're all about the same price on standard stuff. 'Quality and Service'—that's our motto, Mr. Barnes. I want you to examine our private brand,—the 'Rose-in-Bud' line, you know. We put up under it a full line of canned goods, smoked meats, teas, coffee, spices, and so forth, and our advertising will help you sell them."

"I'm no great hand for pushing another feller's brands," Barnes demurred, "but I don't mind looking 'em over and getting your prices. Don't know as I really want to buy to-day, but I thought, seeing I was in town, I'd look around a little."

"It will be no trouble to show you, and we'll be mighty glad to have your order," Grantham urged.

He rang his bell and told the office boy to send in one of the house salesmen. "This is Mr. Barnes, from Winslow, North Carolina," he informed the young man

who came. "He wants to look over our line. Show him the whole works, Gregg, and give him the very best in the house." In a swift aside, the manager added: "He's good as old wheat,—Jenkins has been trying to sell him for years. Go the limit!"

Gregg nodded, and guided the North Carolinian out.

They were back at the end of an hour, Barnes awkward and diffident as ever, Gregg highly pleased with himself. In the interim, Grantham had consulted his files and verified his remembrance. Jenkins's reports showed that he had called on Barnes a number of times, and that he had found the merchant wedded to the "One and Only" brand of one of their local rivals, the Southern Grocery Company. The commercial agency books respectively rated Mr. Barnes "R B" and "D1½," which cryptic signs meant that his wealth was estimated at from fifty to seventy-five thousand dollars and that he enjoyed the first grade of credit.

"Here is Mr. Barnes's order," said Gregg, trying not to look too jubilant. Grantham, no less pleased, ran his eye over the list. It was a beautiful order,—it would give that month's sales just the boost they needed.

"When can you ship?" Barnes wanted to know.

"Right away," Grantham promised.

"That'll do," said the merchant.

He pulled out a large square card, on which was printed:

GEORGE A. BARNES
225 Main Street, Winslow, N. C.
General Merchandise
&
Planters' Supplies

"Reckon you'll want some references?" he inquired.

"Your reputation is quite sufficient," Grantham responded.

"Give you some if you want," Barnes insisted.

"Your commercial rating is entirely satisfactory," the manager said.

"Well, all right," Barnes murmured softly. "Got my street number down on the order, young man? We're getting to have quite a city now, you know. Don't forget the sugar is to be in twenty-five pound sacks. Say, I dunno but you put me down for too many of them canned peaches."

"You'll be wanting more of them in a month," Gregg assured him. "I'll look after your order myself, Mr. Barnes. We're very much obliged to you."

"Indeed we are," Grantham chimed in. "Have a fresh cigar, won't you? Be sure to let us know if we can do anything for you. Joe, see that some order blanks and addressed envelopes are sent with Mr. Barnes's shipment. Don't want you to forget us. Don't fail to drop in when you are in town again."

Barnes accepted a cigar, flaccidly shook hands, and shuffled awkwardly out.

Behind him Gregg executed a scalp dance.

"Gee! Have you lamped that order?" he chanted. "Say, Jenkins will be as sore as a boil!'

"He ought not to care,—he gets the commission just the same, as Winslow is in his territory," Grantham said.

"It ain't that," chuckled Gregg. "It's the joke on the old boy. He's been calling on Barnes for years without selling him so much as a case of soap, and now the old fellow walks in and hands us a three thousand dollar order!"

"Didn't take any salesmanship at all, eh?" commented Grantham with twinkling eyes.

"I didn't mean that," Gregg hastily corrected. "He's no easy mark,—he's posted on prices and fought me to an eighth of a cent. I had to boost him hard to get the quantity, but you told me to go to it!"

"That's the kind of men I like to deal with," Grantham observed. "The harder they are to sell, the better the pay. Take one of those cigars yourself, Joe. You're right; we certainly got a joke on Jenk.

"I wonder," he reflected, "how Barnes happened to come here? Jenkins's reports say he's been tied up with the Southern Grocery Company."

"He didn't come right out and say so," Gregg explained, "but I gathered that they hadn't treated him just right."

"I knew their short-horn methods

would lose them trade," Grantham exulted. "Just the same," his caution dictated, "I'll 'phone them and see what they say about Barnes's credit."

He called the Southern Grocery Company and asked for the credit man.

"This is Budd's,—Grantham speaking. You sell George A. Barnes at Winslow, N. C.?"

"You bet we do," came the reply. "One of our best customers."

"Pays all right, eh?" Grantham questioned.

"Never loses a discount. Say," the voice queried jealously, "you trying to cut under us with old Barnes?"

"No, indeed," Grantham retorted. "We merely want to ship him a few high-grade goods such as you don't carry. Thanks. Good-bye."

When Jenkins came in the following week, Grantham opened up on him with mock sternness.

"What kind of a salesman are you, Jenk?" the manager wanted to know. "Guess I'll have to give you a little vacation in the house and let Joe Gregg make a couple of trips for you."

"Why, what's the matter, boss?" sputtered Jenkins, a rather sporty young gentleman with a nice taste in vests. "Whatcha beefing about?"

"You have been making Winslow for years," Grantham kidded, "sending us in dinky little orders for a barrel of salt and such lovely profit-making goods from Howard, or a box of crackers from Smith & Seigel, and falling down on the best account there,—George A. Barnes. Last week Barnes came in and Joe Gregg sold him a three thousand dollar order."

"Barnes did that!" gasped Jenkins. "The old mutt!"

"He did," gibed Grantham," and what I want to know is, if you're missing 'em that way, how many other good accounts are we losing in your territory?"

"You can search me," said Jenkins in an aggrieved tone, smoothing his waistcoat. "How did you like old whiskers, anyhow?"

"Whiskers?" said Grantham. "He didn't have any whiskers."

"No whiskers!" Jenkins's eyes bored into his chief's strong face. "Why man, he's famous for his red whiskers. He looks like a crimson sunset!"

"He must have shaved 'em off."

"Never!" cried Jenkins, in some excitement. "He's too proud of 'em. What sort of looking man was this, anyhow?"

"Why," began Grantham, a shade uneasily, "a nondescript, countrified, little man—"

"Little!" howled Jenkins, springing to his feet. "Barnes is built like a brick house! He's got red hair all over his face and a chest like a cask!"

"Wait a moment," broke in the manager. "Something's twisted. Call Gregg."

Gregg corroborated Grantham's description. They got Barnes's order from the file and found his card pinned to it.

"Two-twenty-five Main Street!" Jenkins pounced upon the address. "Barnes runs the Planters' warehouse down by the depot. He's half a mile from Main Street. You fellows been stung!"

The three stared at one another.

"Some crook has played you guys for suckers," Jenkins asserted. "He's come in here and ordered a bunch of goods in Barnes's name, and Lord knows where the stuff is now."

"It was shipped to Winslow," Gregg broke in. "How could he get it if he wasn't Barnes?"

"He probably goes by the name of Barnes, you chump," Jenkins explained. "I bet he called your attention to the street address?"

"Yes," Grantham nodded.

"You mailed the invoice and bill-of-lading to his number. He gets 'em, and has the goods reshipped. The real Barnes don't know a thing about it. Like enough the stuff and your butter-mouthed friend are a thousand miles away by now."

"We can trace them," Grantham declared. His strong mouth had set and his merry eyes grown hard. "Where's a time card? We'll catch the next train to Winslow, and I'll run down this bird if it takes a month.

"Joe!" he instructed Gregg, "you hustle around town and see if he stuck any one else. Don't give us away, though."

Gregg hurried out. Grantham rushed home to pack a bag. When he returned Gregg was back with a pretty tale.

"We're no worse'n other folks," he announced with a wry grin. "At Stein's they're still joyful over having sold him the biggest clothing order of the season. He bought a bale of hats. from Dun & Barker; he stocked up on hardware at Moultrie's; Mears has sold him a carload of implements."

"All firms the real Barnes doesn't deal with," put in Jenkins, who was beginning to enjoy himself. "When this thing gets out the local jobber's association will drape its rooms in black for a year."

"You come with me," said Grantham grimly. "If there is to be a funeral, our crooked customer will be the chief mourner."

To think that he had been so baldly tricked made Grantham remorseless, and Jenkins soon found it best to keep his malicious amusement to himself. The ride to Winslow was made mostly in silence. They reached the town in the middle of the afternoon.

"From the number of country people in town, I should think it was court day," observed Grantham.

"It ain't court day," denied Jenkins, "but there's a raft of folks on the street."

The street became more crowded as they made their way uptown. Some distance from the station they found a mass of humanity swirling about a single doorway.

"Suffering sea-cats!" yelled Jenkins. "Look at that! The guy's still here. You're lucky, Boss!"

From the outskirts of the crowd, they could see over the heads of the people a blatant banner of white canvas, rudely lettered in red, tacked roughly across the front of a building. The banner blared:

GEORGE A. BARNES
THE PRINCE OF PRICE CUTTERS!

"Can you beat that for nerve?" asked Jenkins.

"I wonder what the real Barnes is doing," puzzled Grantham.

They fought their way through the crowd. Grantham, flattened for a moment against a window, gave a groan; no wonder people were fighting to get in. Hams that he had sold Barnes at 16c. were marked 14½c; Budd's famous "Bloom of Java" coffee, retailed everywhere for 35c., and invoiced to Barnes at 26c., was offered for 23c.; canned goods that had cost Barnes $2 for a two-dozen case were priced at 9c. a can. In the other window $20 suits of clothes were marked $12.57, and standard $3 hats bore the ridiculous price of 98c.

Grantham and Jenkins battered their way in. A dozen clerks were frantically wrapping parcels and making change while the crowd charged upon the counters. Evidently the news of Barnes's bargains had brought the countryside.

Near the back of the store they found the pseudo Barnes himself. He was very busy, but he had time to smile, and his smile did not change a whit as Grantham stormed up.

"What the devil does this mean?" the manager roared.

"Just having a little bargain sale to introduce myself," the so-called Barnes informed him, with his amiable, diffident smile.

"Introduce insanity!" yelled Grantham, "You're slaughtering the goods!"

"All big stores sometimes sell leaders below cost," Barnes cheerily retorted, sponging a sweaty forehead with a cotton sleeve.

Grantham snorted.

"Break away for a moment. I want to talk to you," he insisted harshly.

The merchant came from behind the counter and led his callers to a cubby-hole in the rear that served for an office. In a wooden chair sat a yellow-headed girl who was making change for the clerks. On a box, in front of her, were two bushel baskets. One of them was half full of loose silver, and the other nearly overflowed with paper money.

"Well?" inquired Barnes in placid tones.

"I want the money for the goods I sold you," said Grantham sternly.

"The bill ain't due, and I dunno as I care to pay it now," replied the other with a friendly grin. "I need this money,"—he nodded toward the baskets,—"to buy more goods, the way sales are running."

"You come across, or I'll have you arrested," Grantham threatened.

"For what?" challenged the other, his little gray eyes twinkling shrewdly.

"For obtaining goods under false pretenses. You told me your name was George A. Barnes—"

"It is," affirmed the little man calmly.

"But you're not *the* George A. Barnes!"

"I reckon I'm just as much *the* George A. Barnes as any one else is. That's what I was christened."

"But you gave me to understand—"

"I gave you to understand nothing," denied Barnes, patient, but a trifle aggrieved. "I come into your place to look around and you set your clerk up to load me. He begged and persuaded me to buy, and I ain't sure but what he stuffed my order at that. You shipped me an awful lot of goods."

Grantham writhed and Jenkins tried to cover a chuckle with a cough.

"You told me you were rated in Dunn and Bradstreet," the manager charged.

"I never told you nothing of the kind," retorted the man, a trifle indignant now. "Jest think a minute; you're the man that said my rating was O. K. I don't know nothing about them rating books; if they got the name of some other Barnes in 'em, and you thought it was mine, it wa'n't my fault. I offered you references and you said you didn't need 'em."

"Do you think you can make me believe your name is the same as that of a merchant who has been here for years?"

"I don't care what you believe," said the other with cheery impudence, "but it's a fact. Look here."

He shambled over to a shabby desk and lifted a great leather-covered book, which proved to be an old family Bible. He opened it at the birth record and pointed out an entry in faded ink.

Grantham read dumbly:

"George Albert Barnes, first son of Henry Barnes and Mary his wife, born the tenth day of December, 1868."

Barnes broke in with a cackling laugh.

"If you're quite satisfied, Mr. Grantham, I'll get back and look after my trade. You come around for your money when the bill is due. I need some more stuff, though. I'm too busy to give you an order now, but you can come around after the store closes to-night, if you want. I reckon I'll have to keep open kinda late, though."

Grantham was busily turning the leaves of the Bible. "Where did you come here from?" he demanded.

"None of your business," returned Barnes promptly. "You'll have to excuse me now, I been patient long enough!"

"I'll see a lawyer about this thing!" thundered the irate sales manager.

"Do," retorted the indomitable Barnes. "There's a good one in the next block!"

Outside, Grantham found Jenkins, who had withdrawn a few moments before, and who had been busy seeking information.

"You oughta see the back of this place," he said. "This guy has bought goods in Richmond and Baltimore and Philadelphia and Norfolk. He's keeping two drays busy hauling 'em from the depot, and the cases and barrels and boxes are stacked up out behind like a mountain. And the funny part of it is, people say the man's name really is Barnes."

"Let's call at the postoffice," Grantham suggested.

"Who is this George A. Barnes?" he inquired of the taciturn, grizzled postmaster.

"I dunno nothing about him," snapped the official. "I'm sick and tired of being bothered about the man. He come here a month ago and rented an old tobacco warehouse and turned it into a store. Then he went away, and pretty soon the goods begin to come. He come back, hung out that sign, started advertising, and raised Cain. Nobody else in town is doing a lick of business."

"Where does his mail come from?"

"That's Uncle Sam's business, young man, and I ain't allowed to state. But I don't mind telling you that it's all business mail,—nothing to show where he come from,—which is what everybody wants to know."

"Then you have no idea?"

"None in the world. All I know is that it's driving me most crazy to keep his mail separate from the other Barnes's."

They took their baffled faces to a lawyer, one suggested by the postmaster, a lank countryman who seemed to enjoy their

story hugely, but could offer no remedy.

"You haven't a shred of a case, Mr. Grantham," he advised. "If the man's name really is Barnes, and he has his Bible to prove it,—" the lawyer burst out laughing,—"you can't do a thing in the world. From your own story, he made no false statements whatever."

"Can't we get an injunction, or something, to stop him slaughtering goods until we find out more about him?"

"Oh, you could apply," said the lawyer, "but it's not worth while. That's honest advice. The other George A. Barnes tried it, and the Judge said there were no grounds. If the man's name is Barnes he has the right to trade under it if there are fifty other merchants here named Barnes, and there's no law against slashing prices."

"Where does he live?" inquired the discomfited Grantham.

"Stays at the hotel, I believe."

"Boss, I reckon we're stung," Jenkins observed, trying not to grin, as they returned to the street.

"It looks bad," Grantham admitted, "but I'm not done yet." His square jaw was set. His habit of hanging on after others had quit had made him sales manager.

"If I can't do anything else, I'll try a shot gun levy," he muttered grimly. "However, I'm not convinced that we can't collect by legal methods."

They registered at the hotel, for Grantham refused to go back until he had thought the matter over. Jenkins remained in the lobby, but the manager decided to go to his room.

As the black bell-boy who guided Grantham up opened his door, the manager inquired:

"George, this new Mr. Barnes staying with you all?"

"Yassuh, he got 59, right around de corner from yuh, suh. He sutunly is sellin' stuff cheap. I got a razuh from him yistiddy foh thuty cents!"

Grantham swore, and entered his room. He waited until the boy had gone down, and then strolled around to inspect 59. He had a shrewd idea that one key at this country hotel would be very like another, and he was not mistaken, for his key worked just as well in Barnes's door as in his own.

Fifty-nine was an ordinary hotel room, showing little sign of permanent occupancy. In the closet hung a worn suit of ready-made clothes, which Grantham examined without learning anything.

On the top of the cheap pine dresser were strewn a few commonplace toilet articles, a couple of soiled collars, a black string tie, a noncommittal brush and comb. The drawers held a small quantity of cheap, unmarked linen. At one side of the room, flanked by a pair of shabby shoes, was a battered suit case, unmarked and empty. Not a thing gave a personal note, not an article held the slightest clue to the previous residence of the placid, unassuming, awkward Mr. George A. Barnes.

Then, as Grantham stood moodily in the middle of the room, peering over every inch of it, his keen eye caught the gleam of a small object shining beneath the bed. Down he went upon his hands and knees, retrieved the object, and carried it to the window. His eyes glowed; his hands trembled.

The manager hurried out and down the stairs. Jenkins was reclining on his shoulder blades in an armchair in the lobby, lazily puffing a cigarette.

"Jenk," Grantham instructed, "I'm going to take the next train north. You stay here and watch friend Barnes like a hawk. If he remains, do nothing; but if he makes a move to leave town, you swear out a warrant and hold him till I get back."

"Warrant for what?" cried Jenkins in amazement. "The lawyer said we couldn't touch him."

"Warrant for any blame thing your so-called mind suggests," snapped Grantham. "Forgery, false pretences, murder or mayhem. You can swear out a warrant for any one on any charge, can't you? I'll see you're protected."

"Whatcha doped out, boss? You got me going. Got a clue? Can't you tell a feller?"

"I've nothing but an idea," answered Grantham. "You hold the fort. I'll get back as quick as I can."

Two days later, travel-worn and tired,

but cheerful as a summer morning, Grantham reappeared. Jenkins had nothing new to report. Barnes was still doing a rushing business.

"The man's a hustler," he declared admiringly. "He's set the town crazy and people are coming in for forty miles around. He works sixteen hours a day, and every afternoon he carries a bushel of money around to the bank and buys a New York draft. What have you found out?"

"Come along and keep your ears open," chuckled Grantham.

They found Barnes as busy as ever.

"Back again, eh?" he said, with the shade of a toothy grin. "Looking for another order?"

"Not exactly," retorted Grantham, "just a few moment's conversation. Have it here or in your office?"

What Barnes read in Grantham's face made him decide in favor of the office. He led the way back to the little rear room, with its yellow-haired girl and baskets of currency.

"Run along, sister," he instructed, and turned to the manager.

"What is it now?" he asked wearily. "I can't be bothered with you all the time."

Grantham imperturbably took out his pocket book, and produced a copy of the invoice for the goods shipped Barnes. With his fountain pen he receipted it and handed it to the merchant.

"What kind of monkey business is this?" the little man demanded uneasily. "I told you I wouldn't pay that bill until it was due."

"I think you'll pay it now," said Grantham. "I'll give you this by the way of discount for the anticipated time."

He fumbled in his pocket, and then held out a large, old-fashioned locket.

"Where did you get that?" Barnes cried, drawing in his breath sharply. "I missed it, but I—"

"I found it by looking for it," Grantham said sternly "You're slick, but the trouble with the smoothest crook is that he can never entirely cover his tracks. There is always some bit of evidence to pop out and confront him."

He opened the locket, revealing the portrait of a pleasant-faced, wholesome looking woman, evidently taken many years before. With a finger nail he pried it out.

"Be careful of that!" Barnes cried in a menacing tone.

His face was drawn and strained, his eyes bulged, his lips were shrunken from his teeth. The man looked dangerous. Grantham did not seem to notice, but Jenkins poised himself for a struggle.

"I'm not going to hurt it," said Grantham gently. He turned the picture over and showed it to Jenkins. On the back was the photographer's name and address.

"I took this to Marbury, Maryland," he explained, "and found the photographer still in business. He identified the picture at once as one he had taken years ago of Mrs. George Albert Barham. And, Mr. George Albert Barham, he told me all about you,—how you failed there in the mercantile business; how you had fallen into shady ways; how, after your wife's death you had disappeared. I suppose you searched the rating books until you found a merchant with a name sufficiently like yours, and then cooked up this scheme!"

Barnes, or Barham, had dropped into a chair. He was breathing heavily, and he had hidden his distorted face in his hands.

He looked up at last, and motioned toward the basket full of bills.

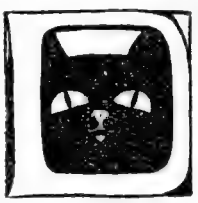
"You win," he said. "Pay yourselves."

IT may be necessary to see Douglas Fairbanks or read his book to "laugh and live;" but if one is satisfied simply to "die laughing," a story entitled THE KISER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY will suffice. This story will be included in the January number.

HOME TOWN HOMAGE

BY HOWARD PHILIP RHOADES

It's a great life when one's home-coming is an event demanding the presence of a committee and a band at the station; that is, it's a great life if the committee and the band don't weaken.



DOCTOR Harold Flavius Maltby sank back into the soft chair with a satisfaction felt once in a lifetime. He looked happily out at the whirling scenery with an air of extreme benevolence and peace. He was going home under circumstances auspicious to say the least,—home, where his reception bade fair to eclipse the warmth with which he had been hailed in the East.

It is necessary that Dr. Maltby be visualized as a slender man of thirty-two, with large, gold-rimmed glasses of striking pattern, and the pale, clean-shaven look of an ascetic. Generations of membership in one of the "old families" had given him the dignity and poise which made him naturally assume leadership and preeminence. One could not look at him without recognizing a man of distinction and accomplishment.

There had been a time when gossips of Springville had whispered that the Maltbys had gone to seed, and that this frail boy would never fill the mantle of those famous Maltbys of Revolutionary and Civil War days.

Now, Doctor Maltby thought with satisfaction, these same reactionaries from the Maltby banner doubtless were begging to get on one of the sub-committees on arrangements for the reception.

Doctor Maltby's radiant satisfaction would take a sudden nervous turn at times, during which he looked at some remembered bit of landscape or drew one or the other of two letters from his pocket. The letter most favored was that which he had received a fortnight ago from Marjorie Lake. Marjorie was a girl in whom he was much interested. He was pleased that he was to receive the plaudits of his own home town. He was more than pleased that he had the favor of Marjorie.

There had been a day,—about the time he left Springville to begin his work in the East,—when he knew Marjorie as an unusual child, who put up pictures of pugilists in her room, and talked a great deal of popular heroes. But that day was past. She was now twenty-two, and, to him, the most eligible girl in Springville. So far as girls were concerned, Doctor Maltby reflected, the "old established families" of the place truly had gone to seed; and Marjorie had their advantages without their decadences of charm. That is, in addition to an attractive personality, she had filial connection with a swiftly accumulating pile of money.

Doctor Maltby had no illusions about girls in the East. Springville, now so kind in paying him homage, was the place for him. This was especially so in view of the most interesting part of Marjorie's letter which said: "It seems ages since I have seen you, and you cannot imagine my eagerness to be once more on terms of actual speech with my doctor man."

"Doctor man,"—the phrase reminded him of a popular song, and he detested popular songs. But, he reflected, the girl was full of youth and vivacity; and families which are not "old families" must be allowed some vagaries, you know!

In one of his nervous movements, Doctor Maltby felt the need of stirring about. There were a number of passengers in the observation car whom he had not noticed. One of them he discovered now in the smoking compartment, reading a magazine. His hope that he would find someone with whom to talk,—for he was in a most affa-

ble mood,—suddenly was realized. He took a closer look at the man who was reading, and then said, in a friendly tone, "How are you, Mr. Flynn?"

The other, a great, strapping, pink-faced boy of twenty-five, raised his eyes.

"Why—howdy, Doctor Maltby," he stammered. "Didn't know you were on!"

"And I hadn't expected the pleasure of seeing you," said the doctor. "I'm on my way back home." His eyes shone with the light which encourages conversation. "Yes," he repeated, "I'm on my way back home."

"So'm I," admitted the other man.

There was a silence during which Doctor Maltby smiled benignly. He knew nothing of Flynn, save that the young man was from Springville. That was enough. That placed him on the homage-paying list.

"You're in the East now aren't you, doctor?" asked Flynn, coloring. He was one of those great-limbed, powerful men, who cannot feel at home with persons of superior poise.

"Yes, in the bigger cities," returned Doctor Maltby. "I'm going back for a look at the good old home folks, and a rest. I've been working too hard."

"Let's see," started Flynn, "you're a surgeon." Then he cried, "Why sure, I was reading about you the other day. It was you who cured the President!"

"The President was under my care for a few days. But his trouble was slight. Of course the papers made a good deal out of it. That case was what called their attention to my hospital work, in which I've really accomplished things. My line is—well, what the layman would call nerve surgery. I've been at it ten years now, and last year I made a discovery which led to what has been called the Maltby cure. The Maltby hospital, near New York, has been financed, and I've been overtaxing myself for the past month training surgeons. After a short time at Springville, I expect to go south for two or three months."

"Well, the papers sure have treated you white," mused Flynn.

"Yes, but I didn't care a lot for that. I've been eager to get home. The old place means everything to me. Father, grandfather, great-grandfather, all born there. You know how we've been for years and years. They've arranged a big reception for me, when I get in. That's what makes a man feel that his work is appreciated."

"Are they holding a reception for you?" asked Flynn, showing interest.

"It looks that way," said Doctor Maltby, smiling genially, and drawing from his pocket the second of his two letters. "This is from Mayor Hunter. He writes, 'The city is certainly going to give you a rousing welcome. It has no worthier son to honor.'"

"He wrote that two weeks ago," said Doctor Maltby. "Doubtless a great deal has been done since then. There's nobody like the good old home folks to go the limit for you. I received some flattering praise in the East, but, pshaw! it won't mean a thing beside what the people who have known me all my life will say. But I mustn't bore you with all this. I'll see you later."

Doctor Maltby!" Flynn called, drawing his big frame up to its full height, and starting after the doctor, who was leaving. Doctor Maltby turned in his poised, clean-cut way and levelled a kindly glance at the ungainly youth's eyes.

The handicap of twenty generations of peat-burning ancestors was upon Flynn. "Why—" he stammered, "I wanted to tell you—I wanted to say—that is,—I wanted to congratulate you on your success."

Doctor Maltby thanked him cordially, and smiled a trifle at the embarrassment of the blushing giant. Then he turned, in his erect way, and went back to his seat. The swift train ate greedily of the remaining miles, while he sat alternating his smiling anticipation and his nervous looks at one or the other of the treasured letters. But mostly he perused the letter signed with the name of Marjorie Lake, for it inspired thoughts which made the regular heart of the man of science beat faster.

He recalled most vividly her vivacious brown eyes, smiling out over a crimsoned, dark skin, the girlish red ribbons she often wore, and the snow white linens in which her slender form was most frequently garbed in summer. The letter from Mayor Hunter was flattering; but, decidedly, the

letter from Marjorie Lake meant more to Doctor Maltby.

Now the train passed Five Mile Locks and sped on to the point where the city of Springville had its newest pride, a real suburb, opened up by a realty company. There was a long, yellow traction car drawn up at the point where its track crossed the railroad. It was bound city-ward. What was that sign on its front?—"Welcome Home!" The rest he did not have time to make out.

"They're doing it up fine," he murmured to himself, with a thrill, as he made ready to be brushed off. Two miles more and the train swung into the first scattered indications of Springville. Doctor Maltby hailed them eagerly. Never had the old place looked so good! Here was the main street of the business section. Its illuminating arches were adorned with flags, and, at a distance, he could see large photographs in the centers of the flag festoons.

Then, as he turned, another sign of home-coming caught his eye. On the grandstand of the ball park, high on the hill, where everybody could see, was a huge sign, "Welcome Home." At that moment the train swerved, and then slowed down for the railroad station.

Doctor Maltby remembered only one occasion when there had been a larger crowd at the station. That was when a President had come to town. When the train halted he saw, in either direction for half a block, a great crowd, wherein he began to recognize dozens of friends and acquaintances. As he stepped from the end of the car, every face seemed turned in his direction and over the great throng was an alert, expectant silence.

They were evidently waiting for him to speak. His arm was raised for a moment of effect before he began. In that moment there burst forth from the multitude a wild, broad-spread cheer, as when a hero comes home from war. The warm sea of pleasure in which Doctor Maltby was swimming, instantly froze to ice.

He had a dizzy feeling that the crowd was looking *beyond* him, and was cheering another person.

"Flynn! Flynn! Mike Flynn!" came surging a tumultuous roar from the crowd.

Doctor Maltby, who had descended a step or two, felt himself rudely pushed aside by a dozen pairs of hands, which were reaching up after the man behind him. He was shot out of the line of pressure, and pushed against the train, where he was pinned,—he and a small man with an Adam's apple and a collar too large for him.

"Doctor Maltby!" sputtered this inconsequential person. "I was just trying to get to you,—but, isn't this a crowd?"

"What—what does it mean?" stammered the recently well-poised doctor.

"Come to my machine," invited the little man, dragging at Doctor Maltby's arm. As the crowd was paying no attention to him whatever, the doctor allowed himself to be pulled over to a muddy little car, some distance away.

"Doctor Hamm," he said sharply, when they had come this far, "explain this! Where's the committee?"

"Over there," said the little doctor, indicating a point in the throng which looked like the center of a college class rush. There a group of young men were feverishly struggling to raise Mike Flynn, and deposit him in a huge touring car, covered with flowers.

"I'm sorry, doctor," explained the chairman of this one man committee. "There's been a change. I thought you knew. Mike got home the same day you did, and, you see, Mike won the World's Series."

"The World's Series,—a ballplayer!" exclaimed Doctor Maltby. "Who's responsible for this? It's infamous!"

"I'm sorry, doctor, awful sorry," protested the little man, grown pale at the sight of Maltby's face. "But I didn't do it. I was against it, but they wouldn't listen. Why, they even forgot you were coming on that train. If I hadn't been there to meet you, there'd have been nobody."

"But what do they mean, after arranging to receive me?"

"Well, you see they thought you'd take it all right, realizing what an advertisement for the town Mike is. He's going to spend the winter here! Got a pool room all arranged for. Tomorrow he goes to Chicago on business. They figured you

could just rest up until then, and tomorrow proceed with your reception."

"Rest up the deuce!" cried Doctor Maltby. "If it wasn't that this is my home, and I know that some people,—one person anyhow,—wants to see me, I'd get on that train, and never come back!"

"Climb in," urged Doctor Hamm, eager to do something compensatory, "I'll take you up." They waited until a great procession, headed by a band, and made up of divisions formed from different civic bodies, had passed. The procession was headed by the flower-girdled car, which contained Mike and half a dozen dignitaries, some of whom were mentioned in the Mayor's letter to Doctor Maltby as being on the committee for *his* reception.

"They wired last night," explained Doctor Hamm. "Maybe it was too late for you to get it. All this was arranged since yesterday when Mike struck out three men with the score tied, and the bases filled, and then hit out a double that scored two men,—and him a pitcher! Really, I don't care for baseball, doctor, but you've got to hand it to Mike!"

"I hadn't heard of it," said Doctor Maltby, coldly. Then he added, with warmth, "Why didn't he tell me about it? I talked to him on the train."

"Maybe Mike's getting the swelled head, already," suggested Doctor Hamm. "But at that, he didn't know how heavy they were going in for this. They just wired to ask him when he'd be here, and he answered that he was stopping off over night to see his folks."

"Let's go to the Mayor's office," said Doctor Maltby. "I've something I want to say to him." Dr. Hamm, feeling that he, perhaps, had rocked the boat too much, kept silent as he ran the machine around to the front of the city hall.

Things were very Sabbath-like about this building. Doctor Maltby knew the way to the Mayor's office, and he strode thither vigorously, followed by the other doctor who pit-a-patted along like a dog after its master.

The only occupant of the Mayor's office was a girl who seemed much vexed over general conditions. "No, I think not any more today," she said. "He's on the reception committee for Mister Flynn, you know. They've a reception for him this afternoon, and another tonight. Everybody around here got off but me!"

"My identical program given for him!" fumed Doctor Maltby. "See here, young woman, tell the Mayor I'll be in to see him tomorrow. Doctor Harold F. Maltby is the name."

As they walked away the stenographer repeated, "Dr. Harold F. Maltby. Well, no wonder they cut him out. He ain't such a Greek god. Mike's got him faded. And here I got to stick. Darn!"

Doctor Maltby was in no humor to remain longer in public. He left the car in front of the Maltby residence, a very old house, in a very old street lined with very old shade trees. Here, at least, his supremacy would be felt. The roomy old house was in perfect order, under the care of Uncle Tommy and Aunt Lindy White, two ancient black servitors.

"I'll be here for lunch and dinner, Aunt Lindy," announced the doctor. "Our arrangements are changed."

He spent two hours in removing the stains of travel, in changing clothes, and in having lunch. Then he sat in the quaint, long dining room, smoking and thinking of his next step, a very pleasant one. Why call on the telephone? He would walk over and surprise Marjorie, with whom he had made no definite appointment.

What did it matter how fickle the townspeople were, so long as Marjorie cared? Immaculate, and with renewed courage, he clicked the old-fashioned front gate behind him and started up the slope toward Marjorie's home. Now he came in view of the hill upon which it was situated. Three years before, when the Lakes had lived near their small foundry at the other end of town, this had been a cow pasture, dotted with thorn trees. But three years had brought war orders, and the possession of a wonderful piece of machinery for making shells. A great change of fortune had resulted, and the Lakes were among the first moneyed people of Springville, if not among the "old families."

Doctor Maltby felt that he had achieved a democratic triumph, in acting out the assertion that the Lakes were socially equal to the Maltbys. He saw the good of new blood being added to aristocracy to keep it from running away to seed. As he glanced for a moment back into the old street, where his family and a dozen others had lived in palatial houses for three generations, he contrasted the two or three girls he knew there with Marjorie. He felt in that instant more clearly than ever what a fine thing it was for him, a Maltby, to link his name with the new financial preeminence of the Lakes.

He entered the Lake grounds through a superb stucco gateway, adorned with plants, and passed up a broad white walk to the stately house, which had been completed only a few months.

At the door a maid said, "Miss Marjorie is out. Mrs. Lake is in."

Presently Mrs. Lake came. She greeted him effusively, and they fell to talking, naturally, of his success. It was not until he made actual mention of Marjorie that Mrs. Lake said, "Marjorie will be here shortly. You will wait?"

He had hardly answered before an automobile door slammed, and they saw Marjorie running up the walk. Mrs. Lake, whose face had borne a peculiar look, akin to uneasiness and worry, excused herself. With a series of apologetic, reassuring looks backward, she started for the door to meet Marjorie. But before she reached the door Marjorie burst in, with a babble of enthusiasm.

"Oh, mother, down on the square, you should see—" she effervesced. "They've got three bands,—think of it!—*three* for this afternoon, and—what?"—she was pausing for some message,—"Oh, well, I don't care,—Hello, Doctor Maltby! Sorry I was out. But you see I had to drive Mike down,—yes, had him up to lunch. My, he's having a day of it,—and he's so embarrassed. But isn't he *great?*"

Doctor Maltby's answer had neither character nor volume to dam the flood. Marjorie bubbled on: "Listen, did you hear about it? I put it over on those Chamber of Commerce men. They wanted Mike for lunch. But I stole him,—think of it,—with the whole town after him, and brought him up here!"

"Marjorie," said Doctor Maltby, tightening his grip upon the hand he still held, "have you, too, gone crazy over this ballplayer?"

"Have I gone crazy,—well, I just guess I have! And don't say 'ballplayer' like that. Of course he's a ballplayer. Is there any other sort of man who could get such a reception? He's the greatest ballplayer in the world!"

"I guess you're right," said the doctor, a little weakened. Then he went on, reproachfully, "Marjorie, you've forgotten all about how warmly you were to receive me. Do you remember that letter you wrote?"

"Oh,—yes!" she cried, with a trace of guilt. But a sufficient explanation came to her immediately, and she said, "But that was before the World's Series."

"We won't quarrel," he said, trying to hide his irritation. "We'll forget this. Naturally you are excited over such an event, in this quiet little place. May I see you this evening?"

She grew quiet, and more serious. "No, doctor, I'm sorry. Perhaps tomorrow afternoon, for a little while. I'd like to talk over your new—serum, isn't it? But tonight I am to be with Mike."

"Marjorie," he reproved. "That impossible—"

"Please don't!" she said, with spirit. "Oh, you must know. Mamma, I may tell Doctor Maltby, in confidence, may I not? It's a secret, doctor. But I know you won't tell. Mike wired me at the end of that game,—that wonderful game,—and I wired back. And he brought me this!"

She lifted her left hand. On the third finger was a huge sparkler.

"Marjorie!" cried the doctor. "Why—you don't know—you don't realize. Please—" Then he stiffened, realizing that he was a Maltby. "I will bid you goodbye," he said with dignity. "I am leaving tonight."

Mrs. Lake, to lengthen a trying scene, interpolated, as an apologetic explanation, a seemingly endless speech in which she told

how Mike's father had been clerk at the foundry for years, and how Mr. Lake believed in Mike's business ability, which was to be developed when he left the diamond year after next, and enough more to make Doctor Maltby burn with shame.

But even as he stepped away from the door, Doctor Maltby felt that the incident, if his most serious affair of the heart could be called an incident, was not closed. Indignantly he tried to think of a plan, yet could summon only the thought that he had decided to go away,—he had little idea just where. But that would be running away. Doctor Maltby was a man who would never give up a patient while there was still a breath of life.

Back home he discovered that there was a train south at midnight. This crystalized his protest against the whole affair and resulted in an important decision.

Pacing back and forth in his room, biting his lip, and nervously pulling at his pockets, he determined that he would stay and fight the battle out. Why should he, a man of national distinction, be foiled by an infatuated girl, and a crude hero of the herd. Surely there were sane influences which could be brought to bear on Marjorie's parents and upon herself, after this mania had gotten out of the town's blood.

There were such things as broken engagements, changes of heart, and cooled infatuations. In the cold, searching eye of the town's thinking people, how could a hulking, uncouth ballplayer stand before a celebrated man of means and family. Certainly there was some way in which this willful miss could be made to see the light. After all, the thing to do was to await the morrow, and then plan carefully.

So with faint music in his ears, telling of the return to the city from the country club, of Mike's triumphant procession, Doctor Maltby set about rehearsing a speech,—the one which he was to have given tonight. Doubtless, he would be invited within the next day or two to make it, and he wished to create a perfect impression. Every move from now on must contrast him favorably with the ballplayer.

After dinner he read a short time and then decided to retire. He would need a good night's rest to start him on his campaign. For an hour he dozed restlessly. Then he was startled by a loud blare as a noisy procession went through the street, and the red-fire torches illuminated his room.

Outside, figures grotesque and fantastic were limned against the flaring of the torches. From the marching ranks arose this chant:

"Mike! Mike! Mike! He made 'em strike-strike-strike!
Flynn! Flynn! Flynn! Did he win-win-win?"

This was followed by a cheer of exultation prolonged and thunderous. Doctor Maltby groaned and turned away. After another period of restless sleep, he sank into deeper slumber.

He was awakened, some time later, by a loud knocking at his door. Then he heard the voice of Tommy White, the old negro servant.

The old man was crying in an excited way that somebody had been hurt, and mentioning the name of the Mayor. Doctor Maltby was up in an instant. When he peered out of his door he saw, for the first time since his arrival, the chairman of the committee on arrangements for his reception, Mayor Hunter.

"Pardon me, doctor, for breaking in like this," said the Mayor. "Thought I'd get to see you sooner and apologize for the change. We want you to come at once, doctor! Mike's hurt. It's his arm,—think what that means,—his right arm. He was on his way home when his machine was struck by an interurban. Some of the others have looked at it, and they say it's nerve paralysis. But we couldn't think of them handling it, with you in town. Can you come right away?"

Doctor Maltby was first of all a professional man, and he had no thought of refusing. In fact, as he hurriedly dressed, he began to see herein a situation for starting off with a fine stroke his campaign to open the eyes of Marjorie Lake.

He was bustled into a machine and hurried to the hospital, the steps and corridors of which were lined with a growing crowd of people who had left their beds on hear-

ing of the accident. In the faces of those who had watched his coming when he was called upon to treat the President, he had noted no such solicitude and concern.

Half a dozen members of the Chamber of Commerce, men who had reached over his head that morning to grasp Mike, now pressed forward, their faces full of appeal, begging him to relieve the suffering hero. In such wise, after spending a day abandoned and forgotten, Doctor Maltby suddenly burst into the limelight as the town's most important and sought-after citizen.

He stepped into the hospital as a king into his throne room. His slender frame was stiffened, and all of the poise and command of the morning was back. He was there before them, the famous surgeon, by his acts to convince them of his superiority. Sharp, decisive orders he shot at the waiting nurses and doctors. His face took on the look of some great general, directing a situation of gigantic proportions. He set his gold-rimmed glasses more firmly, squared his shoulders and advanced, with a great light of distinction and accomplishment in his pale, clean-shaven face. Everybody stood as thoroughly awed as the slaves of an Eastern potentate.

As he was about to step into the operating room, there was a commotion in the corridor. "It's Miss Lake, sir," said an intern. "She wants to see you."

Doctor Maltby stood for a moment in an erect and studious attitude. Then he said, with cold restraint, "She may come."

There was a new and deeper look in Marjorie's face, as she ran through the corridor. She seemed less a girl, more a woman, as she gasped his arm, and asked, "You're going to operate, aren't you? Please let me see! I want to watch."

She was looking up at him in the proper attitude for a girl with respect for ability, a girl sensing truth, after foolhardiness. He looked into her earnest face with new warmth within him.

"Yes," he said. "You may watch."

"I want to be near," she said, standing close to him, and touching his arm. "I want to see it all."

"You shall be at my right hand," he answered.

In the operating room Mike lay groaning, his mighty chest and arms exposed, and a pallor over him. He looked toward Doctor Maltby and Marjorie, trying to twist his tortured features into a smile Marjorie suppressed a gasp. Doctor Maltby's face had rather more than the cheer a doctor must display to meet the ends of professional optimism.

Mike's right shoulder, that knotted mass from which swung the arm which had vanquished the greatest batters of the nation, seemed lower than the left one. With the eyes of all the hospital's nurses and doctors upon him, together with those of a goodly number of the town's more important men, who had pushed their way in, Doctor Maltby began work.

This was the work which had raised him to preeminence among the hundred million, which had given him miles of newspaper space, which had brought him fame, and which, lastly, had inspired his fellow townsmen to arrange for him a great ovation. And this was the work which would denounce those who had eliminated that ovation, and show them how shameful, and hollow and unjustified had been their hero worship and their neglect of merit!

Under his trained fingers, at the whim of his brilliant brain, lay their hero, an overgrown, whining boy, a mere fellow graduated from a vacant lot because of ability to play a child's game. Doctor Maltby began work with all the confidence and vigor of the man who knows he is a figure in the world, and who is demonstrating it to lesser beings.

He was twisting and pulling at Mike's arm now, sending his slender fingers into the mass of muscle, as if probing. Then, of a sudden, he drew the arm to one side and stretched it far up. Mike gave a shrill scream of pain, and then his face relaxed.

Doctor Maltby gave a few directions in telling technical phrases and then motioned for the wheeled table to be taken from the room.

Marjorie was beside him, a wistful, eager look in her face. Her throat was catchy, and all she could murmur was, "Doctor,—doctor."

"Come, Miss Lake," said Doctor Maltby,

leading her into an ante-room, eager to follow up his advantage. She was leaning upon him now, as she would lean all her life he felt, she who had come to see the light long before he had pictured victory, in his brightest dream.

They were alone for a moment, and she grasped him, as if to embrace him. As he was about to close his arms around her, she moaned, "Oh, doctor, will he live?—is he all right?"

Doctor Maltby reeled, as he pushed her at arm's length, and then slowly allowed his grip upon her shoulders to relax, and drop.

"He's not hurt," he said in a low, beaten voice. "His arm was merely dislocated."

"Oh, doctor," she cried. "I am so glad you were here—to save my Mike!"

She turned, without even shaking his hand, and ran away. For a moment Doctor Maltby was alone. He stared stupidly at the great shelves of cotton and supplies, and said in a vacant, far-away voice, "For the love of Mike,—for the love of Mike!"

A house physician had dared open the door. He began to ask a question.

"Tell them the king lives—and will pitch again," said Doctor Maltby, walking down the corridor.

He paused at the telephone and ordered his old servant to bring his bags to the South railroad station at once. He fled from handshakes and dodged out a side door.

The station, but a short walk away, was the smaller one of the city, and of the sort where the operator sells tickets and assists with the baggage, when not working on the wire. The operator, a young chap of the necktie age, was embroiled with Louie, the baggage-smasher, over the batting averages of a couple of players in one of the minor leagues. Somehow, major league topics had worn out this evening after the first three hours of argument.

The station factotum left baseball long enough to listen to Doctor Maltby who asked about trains south. The doctor thought vaguely of going to New Orleans, and cruising from there. "Sorry," said the ticket seller, "but I'm out of time-tables giving that connection at Cincinnati, and I don't recall it. But here, it's in the paper." He handed over a copy of the evening newspaper. As he was called away to check a piece of baggage, he said, "Look in that column, beside those baseball notes."

Doctor Maltby pored over the time-table. The young man was still busy. Then Tommy came puffing in with the bags. When the servant had gone, Doctor Maltby perused the paper again. His eyes strayed from the time-table. He read something with interest. Then eagerly he drummed against the ticket counter. The young man was before him.

"Does the morning train out of Cincinnati have a boat connection at New Orleans for Nickadore?" he asked.

"Nickadore—oh, the Central American republic? Wait. I've got a boat directory. There's one out of New Orleans Friday, and you'd get there Thursday night. Yes, you'd just make it."

"Good!" said Doctor Maltby, and purchased a through ticket.

The train rushed in, and Doctor Maltby took it. He did not even look out at the lights of his home town, as it faded behind.

Back in the station, the ticket seller started a third perusal of the sport page. Suddenly he found something in the baseball notes which interested him.

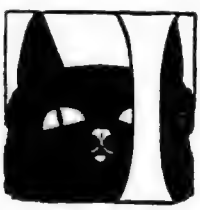
"Hey, Louie," he cried. "What do you think of that poor nut that just started for,—what is it?—Nickadore—in Central America? Say, he's going to a rare place! Listen, here it says:

" 'Nickadore, Central American republic, is now said to be the only country in which baseball is not played.' "

THE BREAD UPON THE WATERS

BY GRISWOLD WHEELER

Senor and Senora are not familiar with the law of compensation. Likewise they fail to read the biblical recipe which provides for casting bread upon the waters, and are surprised therefore at the reactionary tendencies of of the bread.



IT was a dark and foul little alley, though some called it a street. Its width was such that two portly men, meeting, would have passed with difficulty. On each side the houses rose sheer, their walls punctuated by occasional dust-laden windows staring dismally down on the scene beneath. The upper stories had sagged and now leaned confidingly toward each other as if whispering together on matters within. Or perhaps ashamed of conditions beneath, they had conspired to shut out as much light as possible. Above, the sky ran, a narrow ribbon of blue.

The ground floors of these buildings were infested by a multitude of small shops. Clusters of starched looking spaghetti, that had not escaped the attention of the flies, decorated the windows, each tied with a broad band of cheap ribbon that would eventually adorn the raven locks of some Senorita whose passion for attire surpassed her sense of cleanliness.

In or above these shops dwelt their several proprietors and such others as could be induced to share the general sordidness.

But such surroundings, it appears, never deters the Angel of Birth; for on a certain warm May evening it was hovering above the abode of one Salvargo, who was not even a proprietor. That he was fortunate enough to occupy the ground floor was due in a measure to the fact that his brother-in-law owned one of the numerous little shops, plus a stubborn refusal on his part to move. How he lived was one of those great human riddles that only the destitute can solve, and they guard the secret jealously.

The sun was setting as the Angel entered the grimy little apartment. In a corner on a wide mahogany bed lay a woman. It was a bed with a history, for Salvargo, returning home from a summer's campaign with his regiment, had brought it with him on a mule to his promised bride. The fact that both bed and mule had been stolen in no manner impaired the subsequent slumbers of the couple.

The Angel of Birth glanced around the apartment, and as angels have, it is to be supposed, apparently never studied modern methods of sanitation, it appeared satisfied. Festoons of onions hung from the low rafters, while in a wired and jealously guarded cage in the corner, were two huge cheeses, whose aroma on warm days would sally forth and contest the atmosphere with the onions. On a wooden table were the remains of a half-eaten meal and a bottle of wine. A few chairs, cheap prints of various debilitated looking Saints and an ivory Crucifix completed the furnishings. By the bed sat the midwife, a creature whose one eye leered evilly from behind an aquiline nose. From time to time she refreshed herself from the bottle of wine placed near at hand upon the table, and would then relate certain anecdotes concerning other patients fortunate enough to obtain her invaluable services. The possibility that her present patient might also be thirsty apparently did not occur to her. It is true, these natal narratives were of a more weird than instructive nature, but as the nurse believed in always diverting a patient she continued to cudgel her brains and with the assistance of the wine left nothing to be desired. Possibly a more nervously constituted woman than Senora Salvargo would have long since died of terror, but as Italian women become stoical at an

early age she simply lay still and stared at the ceiling, breathing heavily.

Finally her husband entered and approached the bed; then, to show that he was in accord with the situation, jested, grasped the bedpost and rocked with merriment at his humor. The Senora smiled up at this display of feeling; she had expected him to curse because there was no supper. When his mirth had subsided, he took from its place above the door a huge cutlass and seating himself close to the bed, commenced to sharpen it, occasionally interpolating the process with tales of gore and bloodshed. Finally he arrived at his *piece de resistance,*—the capture of the aforesaid mahogany bed, an escapade in which the slaying of the bed's sleeping occupants was the first and least important step. The woman glanced proudly at her companion. Here was a man to be proud of, to bear sons to. But the midwife, her tales beginning to be equalled, relapsed into sullen silence; and at last quiet reigned save for the swift swish of oilstone on cutlass. At intervals the man would pluck a hair from his head and test the blade's edge, for he had won not a few wagers as the proprietor of a cutlass that would split hairs.

At last the Angel of Birth approached the bed. The nurse motioned to the man and he departed out into the night, down to the little wine shop at the corner, trundling his huge cutlass with him. Perhaps the advent of some stranger in town, willing to wager upon its hair splitting abilities would throw a few coins his way, or if he could freshen up some of his tales enough to lure a few paying guests within, the proprietor would later reward him with a bottle of wine. And thus the night sped.

When morning dawned the Angel of Birth had departed and Senor Salvargo was the proud father of a son. And such a son! It had been born with a veil over its eyes and was sure to become a seer. A fine young body it had, straight of limb, sturdy of build. Nearly twelve pounds, the midwife had informed him, also intimating that his wife, who was at present convalescing with a rapidity common only to her prolific race and class, hoped the following day to prepare a little feast in honor of the event.

But during the night the Angel of Death had also visited the house. The brother-in-law had departed this life in a fit of apoplexy brought on by rage at the theft of a keg of wine from his cellar. The succeeding landlord being of a less sentimental and more courageous nature, speedily informed the old soldier that he must either vacate or pay rent; and thus it came about that shortly after the birth of a son, destitution stared the family in the face.

"We must give him away," stormed the father.

"No, no," wailed the woman, "the good Mother will suggest a way. He is such a fine boy with all his father's beauty." The latter statement seeming to mollify the man, they sat down to ponder and pray upon a plan to retain the offspring with which they had been blessed so late in life.

Finally the father jumped to his feet. "It has come!" said he, and hurried out and down the street, pausing at the house of one Lursifal. After a somewhat protracted pounding, there was a slight scuffling noise within and the door opened grudgingly. "Come," said the father to the distorted figure that appeared, "we have work for you." The man packed a little black bag and followed silently, and thus it came about that "Lursifal the Cripple-Maker" was introduced into the house of Salvargo.

When the child was brought in, even the newcomer was moved to speech. "Beautiful!" he cried. "With such eyes and such features he will die rich," and Lursifal ran his fingers appraisingly over the infant's body.

The mother was choked with sobs. "It kills me," said she, "but we love him and cannot bear to part with him. He might fall among those who would love him not." The mother's grief appeared genuine, but the father's eye concealed but poorly a gleam of cupidity.

The Cripple-Maker leaned over the bed and the child smiled up at him. "Ah, that smile," said he, "it will induce the donors to retrace their steps and add even more to the gift."

There followed the usual haggling as to price, the father explaining their present impecunious condition. Lursifal wanted cash. "In the face of your prediction," said the adroit father, "are you not willing to take a commission?"

Finally it was arranged that for three years after the child commenced his career, one third of his earnings would go to Lursifal, he taking the mahogany bed as security. Then they opened their last bottle of wine to the child's future, though the mother drank but little.

Finally the child was placed upon the table, gleefully sucking a stem of spaghetti; and Lursifal rolled up his sleeves, baring a pair of arms muscular beyond all proportion to his body and size. A few deft movements, then a snap. A slight gasp followed by a staccato shriek from the child. "Those bandages quick," said the man. Swiftly they were bound to the child's body. "You will remove them in a fortnight," said he and departed, only a low moaning from a basket in the corner showing that he had called.

Some years had passed. Such portions of the child's body as were intended to grow had grown, and all of Lursifal's predictions had been more than fulfilled. The father's features were striking in a coarse way; the child had inherited their cast, softened to a beauty bordering on the effeminate. The face was oval and slightly bronzed by the sun, the nose perfection, the mouth delicate and wistful. The eyes were of that elusive quality which defies classification. It was difficult to call them any color for they seemed to burn with the soft glow of fever. At times they were still and placid, then as some spasm of pain racked the body, they would darken as does the quiet bosom of a lake when stirred by a wandering breeze.

But with all he had been a contented child, and now that he was approaching manhood, this spirit in no way forsook him. True, like the rest of the world, he had his troubles; merely transient ones, however, generally disappearing at mealtime or mass. The greatest source of his worries was Lursifal. Not contented with the returns from the three years of apprenticeship, he, at the expiration of that time, reported the boy's marvelous earning capacity to the police of the various sections. And they, because they must divide with Lursifal for the information or miss many other golden opportunities became exorbitant in their demands. Of late his earnings had been sorely diminished even as the demands of his aging parents increased in size and frequency. Still he was happy. Many friends he had who would pause and pass the time of day with him as he leaned against the cathedral. Even the priests, attracted by his youthful and carefree countenance, threw many little benevolences his way, for to them he was emblematic of the resignation taught by the Saviour. But when, as not infrequently occurred, the eyes darkened and deepened and the shadow of Hell's torment crept into them, they would pass hurriedly on, a kindred pain in their hearts, a prayer upon their lips.

Thus the years sped and the youth grew in arms and shoulders and Lursifal's image, for Lursifal had planned it so.

Among other attributes he was intensely religious. Long hours he would spend on his knees in the church praying. For what he prayed is not known. Perhaps for a well-filled purse, for as sincere and intense as were his devotions he seldom left without one concealed somewhere about his person, though not infrequently he remained to aid in the search for it. While there he also sang in a voice, that were it not a country where beautiful voices abounded, would have been extensively remarked. Later these same sacred airs would help beguile the centimes when other means failed. His clear voice, vibrant with some sacred anthem, rising on the soft Italian air, caused many to pause, listen and contribute.

To some he was known as the Saint of the Cathedral, though at times the police thought differently, possibly not without cause; for when one of them had been rather inexpedient in his demands and the youth's pockets were correspondingly empty, the officer would sometimes halt abruptly in his exit from the scene. Then he would retrace his steps, his hands covering a swelling that gave promise of rivalling the goose's egg in size, and he would question

the youth adroitly as to who had projected the missile, and if by any chance he was the offender. And though often his suspicions amounted to almost a certainty, no tangible proof was forthcoming. The large eyes would be raised sadly to the questioner's face. "My friend," the clear, placid voice would say, "somewhere thou hast an enemy. I will keep watch for him,—fear not, he will soon be discovered," and there the matter had, perforce, to rest.

At last came the day when he could no longer maintain father and mother, and they were old and helpless. Before them lay the prospect of entering the asylum the State provided for the destitute, from whence issued tales of intolerable cruelty doubtless sufficiently augmented to prevent any from entering it prematurely. So as was his wont, he took himself and his sorrow to the altar. There he purchased a candle,—one of the largest,—lighted it and proceeded to pray. And as is usual with those who pray long, the slow movement of his lips became slower and finally ceased. Dreams commenced to mingle with the prayers, dreams tinged with memory. He was back again in his childhood days, perched upon the knee of her who had been his mother's midwife. She was talking, as usual, and the words were borne clear on memory's voice,—how his father and mother loved him and rather than allow him to fall among those who would beat and starve their boy, they sent for Lursifal, giving as security, the mahogany bed for which his father had so valiantly striven. Ah, this was love and he must save them in return; but how?

Again he fell to praying passionately, fiercely, his huge but beautiful hands knotted in supplication. Gradually they relaxed, slowly the bent form lifted itself, and on his face was the clear light of one who sees visions. "The answer," he murmured in low, awed tones, "it has come."

And as he left, the coin box by the door resounded loudly to the clatter of his last centimes.

With laborious quickness he threaded his way home past his friends, past even the good father, without a glance of recognition, so inwardly absorbed was he, his features transformed with a glorified, unearthly appearance. The good father paused, looking back at him. "At times I believe men still see visions," he remarked to his companion.

"Who knows," the other replied and they passed on.

Reaching home he closed and bolted the door, also the windows and again prayed. In the corner, on their old mahogany bed, which in a period of prosperity he had long since redeemed for them, lay his parents. He approached and gazed down upon them with affection. They had saved him, he would do likewise. Lifting a chair to a position under the door, he mounted it. The couple slept unconcernedly on. Then he descended and stood by the bed. A fly was perched in possessive insolence on Salvargo Senior's nose, enjoying atmospherically a luncheon composed of cheese and onions. "Sleep, loved ones, it is better so," murmured the son. Then with his herculean arms, he raised on high his father's cutlass. It whirred through the air as it descended, cleaved the mattress and settled deep into the wood-work of the bed, while to Senor and Senora Salvargo there remained no feet.

On pleasant mornings outside the cathedral sit an interesting trio. A crippled youth of glorified countenance sings holy anthems, while an old couple join quaveringly in the Amen.

And on days when the coins shower particularly fast into the tin cups, they reflect upon their son and how surely the bread they cast upon the waters returned again unto them fourfold.

THE SECOND OBEDIENCE

BY HERMAN HOWARD MATTESON

Lo, the poor Indian! He has no psychical research society to comfort him when harassed by things supernatural. He appeals to the Seal Commission, and the Commission solves the problem without calling in Sherlock Holmes or Sir Oliver Lodge.

A PRETTY specimen of a man was the Quatsino brave who came stalking into the Victoria office of the International Seal Commission. From Victoria to Cape Scott, the westernmost point on Vancouver Island is something over three hundred miles; in four days this "skookum canimman" had made it alone in a two man canoe. Thrusting a wide hand into his hair seal shirt, tanned fur side out, the brave produced a roll of madronna bark, opened it and spread it upon the table.

The chief and Jimmie Densmore bent over it and found a rude drawing of an alligator-like beast with an adventitious dozen or so claw-armed legs. The chief and Jimmie knew the Indian. Neither laughed at the fantastic caricature; instead both looked very grave.

"Tsuquanah say send some one quick who makes medicine stronger than the medicine of Tsuquanah. Dark nights, when wind blows, this comes, flies over Quatsino village. Then no one stirs, but cries in the corner, making medicine and saying his nesika-papa. Besides, this koosagh tomanawas"—the brave pointed down to the picture of the monster—"this koosagh tomanawas flies, and flies; when no Quatsino it finds for food, it goes mad and kills many seals. Long time ago, white man say it to Quatsinos, 'Let nobody kill a seal on Vancouver Island.' Quatsinos say they won't; but who has spear long enough to reach the koosagh tomanawas? White man maybe. Tsuquanah say to send quick brave white man with strong medicine and sukwalal that smokes."

The chief glanced up at Jimmie, whose eyes but too plainly evinced his hopeful anticipation. "It's a young man's job, Jimmie; you're elected."

Expeditiously, Jimmie packed his canvas dunnage bag. When Jimmie held up to view a pocket flash light and an automatic revolver, respectively the strong medicine and the sukwalal that smoked, the brave stared at the trinkets with obvious disappointment and disgust. But without a word he led the way to the waterfront where they embarked in the two man canoe. As deftly almost as the Indian himself, Jimmie dipped his paddle and they were away.

By the time that they had pitched their last camp, purposefully delayed by Jim in order to bring their arrival at the Indian village during the night, the terror of Tipshin, the white man's companion, had grown to a panic. While thoroughly persuaded that pure imagination had traced the fabulous monster on the madronna bark, Tipshin's fears were so patently genuine that Jim began to wonder whether the job cut out for him was not larger than he had anticipated.

Tipshin had explained thoroughly the geography of the Quatsino village and environs, incidentally mentioning the presence of a camp of Chinese halibut fishermen on the shore of the bay opposite the Indian settlement.

By Jim's orders, Tipshin landed the canoe just below the fishermen's camp. They drew the canoe well up into the brake and alder near the point where the trail opened, about a hundred yards from the Chinese houses, which were four in number. The night was exceedingly dark, a circumstance as welcome to Jim as it was terrifying to Tipshin.

At the very edge of the wood, Tipshin balked. His teeth were chattering; he was shaking like a man in the convulsive grasp of an epileptic seizure.

"Here," said Jim, handing the brave the pocket flash, "you take the strong medicine; then you'll be all right."

Thus equipped against the koosagh tomanawas, Tipshin ventured into the trail.

They had passed the Chinese settlement, where not a light showed, when Tipshin, with a gurgling, strangled sort of wail, leaped forward like a startled buck and tore away into the darkness. Jim's impulse to laugh received a sudden check.

From high above his head came a droning, wailing sound that grew stronger, hovered an instant, and went on. The sound was something like the sing of a bullet, but much louder and longer sustained.

Decidedly this was a spooky proposition. For just an instant, in fact, Jim had to employ his white man's logic to rescue himself from an attack of creeps, and to resist the impulse to dash down the trail after the speeding Tipshin.

Then came a second, ghostly, whining bogie, this time nearer earth and with a voice a tone or two deeper than that of the first. Earnestly Jim imprecated the terrified Tipshin who had fled with the strong medicine in his grasp. One flash of the pocket search then and there might have solved the mystery for good and all.

The Indian village was in utter darkness save for a splinter of light coming from beneath the door of the largest lodge. Vancouver Indians are house dwellers. From within came wails, moans, gutteral supplications. Jim opened the door and entered. In the corner, Tipshin and old Chief Tsuquanah were hastily piling into a cooking basket a miscellany of mud shark fins, bills and claws of birds, and sprigs of the plant called salal. The white man's boasted strong medicine, discarded as a rank, counterfeiting pretender, lay upon the floor.

As though unaware of the white man's presence, Tipshin and Tsuquanah, to the accompaniment of ceremonious speech and objurgation, continued to concoct their devil charm.

Jim picked up the flash-light and moved to the narrow paned window. Upon the water before the Chinese settlement he thought that he could detect a movement. Noiselessly he opened the door, ran down The flash-light he thrust into a pocket. the trail to the beach and along the sand.

When part way down the stretch of beach, he could discern what was taking place. A sizable craft had come up alongside the makeshift wharf used by the Chinese. Shadowy forms were moving back and forth swiftly between the boat and the houses. Presently the boat shoved out into the stream a hawser's length, the anchor let go, and two men came ashore in a skiff. Shortly a faint light showed momentarily in the largest of the houses, and then all was dark.

Jim, a plan of action forming in his mind, returned to the lodge of Tsuquanah, who had concluded his incantation over the basket of medicine. The old chief came forward and held out his hand, undisguised admiration showing in his face for a white man who dared go abroad and face the dread koosagh tomanawas.

After a few moments, Tsuquanah led the white man to an adjoining room and pointed to a pile of blankets upon which was laid as a coverlet the skin of a sea otter, worth a fortune in the shop of a metropolitan furrier.

"You sleep here, tyee," said Tsuquanah. "To-morrow we talk about koosagh tomanawas."

With sun up Jim was stirring. At once he acquainted Tsuquanah with his plan to remain hidden from sight while any of the Chinese were about. Also he strictly enjoined the chief to direct his braves to keep secret from the Chinese the fact of the white man's presence. Tsuquanah looked up sharply.

"You think Chinamen bring tomanawas to destroy Quatsinos? You say it, tyee, we go quick and kill Chinamen."

Jim counseled nothing of the sort; he wanted simply an opportunity to observe the Chinese secretly.

Nootka, Tsuquanah's pretty daughter, served Jim with an excellent breakfast, after which the chief beckoned the white

man to one of the windows of the lodge.

The Chinese were just putting out to the halibut boat. Tsuquanah counted them off as they climbed the rail. "Taht-le-lum pequinnum. Fifteen men. That's all."

The halibuter steamed toward the open, turned to the eastward and disappeared behind a promontory.

"They go get herring bait to fish halibut fish. All day they go away."

Jim hastened down the beach and climbed the slight rise upon which were situated the four dwellings of the Orientals. Three of these houses were but mean structures, built of boards combed from the shore. The fourth house, really a duplex affair with a roofed porch between the units, was rather pretentious. A couple of outlandish looking dogs rushed out at Jim, but scurried into the brush under a fire of beach pebbles.

In a space before the house were a number of gaudy mandarin ducks in a pen. Upon boards leaning against the wall, an immense devil fish was drying in the sun; squid and rice is a favorite Chinese dish. Just within the opening to the porch was a large cage, made of rattan and bamboo, containing a score or more grayish, long-tailed pigeons. Also, in a cage by itself, was a solemn, old pelican with a copper ring about its neck. Falconry, the art of taking game and fish with trained birds, was being practiced in China three thousand years before the first crusade.

A door to the right stood open. All was quiet within the house, so Jim cautiously crossed the threshold.

An involuntary exclamation of surprise escaped him. All about were rich, heavy pieces of teakwood furniture; scattered about upon shelves of bamboo were priceless bits of porcelain, jade and cloisonne; standing before a door leading to an adjoining room was a threefold screen of silk embroidered with golden dragons, butterflies and a long-tailed bird in flight.

Here was the apartment of no less than a mandarin, a Chinese boss. The furnishings and appointments of the place were of a richness and prodigality to square with Tsuquanah's statement that Let Gee, owner of the halibut boat, coolie foreman of half a thousand cannery hands in Alaska and on Puget Sound, possessed "hiyu-ckickaminmoney," and "skookum-say-so-yes," among his countrymen.

Jim was engaged in studying a hideous, squat joss standing upon a table in a corner, a bit of punk burning aromatically in a brazier before it, when he heard a faint, shuffling sound. One of the wings of the silken screen folded itself back softly; there in the doorway, kow-towing almost to the floor, with arms spread wide in the ample sleeves of blue silk edged wtih gold thread and bits of fur, stood a Chinese girl.

She straightened her lithe body erect. Jim gasped. Here was an exceedingly pretty girl, by the Chinese standard, or by any standard. She advanced a mincing step, and waved a slender hand toward the adjoining room. There stood a small table, no higher from the floor than a tabouret, set forth with porcelain dishes containing rice cakes, candied fruits, the white meat of a fowl cut up with sprigs of parsley and green onion top. Above the table, depending from a rather low ceiling, were seven, scarlet, paper lanterns.

"Come look see," said the little Celestial, again waving the young white man welcome. "Come look see. You savey this feast of seven lanterns? Cause why? Oh, I say it, my birthday. All alone I have it feast of seven lanterns. Come look see."

Jim was conscious of a mixed feeling of dismay and amusement at being detected in the act of prowling through the house, commingled with which was a genuine interest in the prattle of the little girl, and in her garish and bizarre surroundings.

He entered. Obedient to her request he seated himself cross-legged upon the floor. She poured him a cup of tea, handed the rice cakes, and then retired gracefully to the wall where she stood with hands behind her.

"When man eat, woman no eat but wait," she explained succinctly.

"Nonsense," protested Jim earnestly. "If I am to regale myself at your birthday dinner, I certainly expect you to join me. Come on."

"Ali-li." She came teetering forward, crossed her silk trousered limbs under her

and smiled up at him engagingly. Jim's initial attempts with the chop sticks appeared to afford her vast amusement, and after a mutually hearty laugh their acquaintanceship progressed famously.

Her name, it appeared, was San Chih. With her father, Lum Gow, a sort of personal assistant and attaché to Let Gee, she lived in a portion of the double house, the Chinese boss in the other.

"Let Gee swear a lie," she confided naively. "He say it to gold braid man that I am his wife. Gold braid man make a chock-chee paper. Then I come from Hongkong to Kechikan way off. My father and Let Gee are then in cannery way up. I have nice time in Kechikan. White ladies are there who teach me many things. When Let Gee come I say to him I am not his wife. Let Gee gets mad and cries like baby seal. He say it he tell gold braid man my chock-chee is not honorable chock-chee so I have to go back to Hongkong. He don't do it. He thinks maybe some day I change my mind and marry him. I don't know."

She folded her hands demurely, blushed and directed her gaze through the window. The enameled figure upon the incomparable Ming porcelain standing upon the bamboo shelf might have been a minature of her. The exotic charm of the girl overwhelmed Jim with sudden admiration, and he was selfishly glad for some of the many things taught San Chih by the kind, white ladies of Kechikan.

"That's right, San Chih," he said, impulsively reaching across the table and touching her sleeve, "marry no one unless —unless you love him." Then it was Jim's turn to blush and gaze out through the window.

Prattling away with childish enthusiasm, San Chih ran from the room presently to return with some specimens of her handicraft. There was embroidery so fine that it was almost like gossamer floated upon a sunbeam. Also she displayed water colors of storks, and dragons, and peaked mountains. Last of all she displayed her dearest treasure, a ring of dull gold with a flat signet top upon which, little by little, she was adding a design in colored enamels.

"See?" San Chih struck a Chinese sulphur match and ignited an alcohol lamp. With a long, slender needle, which she heated from time to time, she deftly applied the enamel, building it in and blending the colors with a skill truly marvelous. The character which began to show in the enamel looked not unlike a letter "T," superimposed upon a badly deformed "Z."

"What does that mean?" asked Jim, pointing to the character.

San Chih bent her head and laid the ring back into its nest of white cotton. "I couldn't say it—now—to the white man," she answered softly.

When San Chih left the room to return her treasures to place, Jim looked at his watch. He was amazed, and a little alarmed to note the lapse of time.

When San Chih returned, Jim, a trifle at a loss to find exactly the words, began to make his excuses. Into his own wide fist he took her hand, a tiny hand, slender and graceful; and, without coquetry, as without fear, she let it remain while she looked up at him.

"San Chih," said he earnestly, "I am going to ask something of you, something unusual that you may not understand. I wonder if you will make me a promise?"

"What it could be?"

"This, San Chih,—say nothing to your father, to Let Gee, to any one—of my visit here. Will you just take me on faith—and promise?"

She gave her head with its crown of shining, pomaded, jet-black hair a bird-like twitch. Gently she tensed her fingers about his, gave his hand an honest, American shake.

"Sure tling," she pattered. And it was a bargain.

As the young white man walked rapidly away, a head lifted itself cautiously from the porch roof; two malevolent, rat-like eyes followed him.

Half way to the Quastsino village, Jim met Tipshin. "I come quick," said the Indian. "Tsuquanah say it to come. China boat when it go away this morning no go far. It stop. A dory go ashore. A man get out. Tracks go in salal bush. So I come quick."

His head bent in thought, Jim hurried along toward the lodge of the chief. Just before he entered, Tipshin plucked him by the sleeve.

"You kechum koosagh tomanawas?"

Jim shook his head, no.

"Too bad," observed Tipshin disappointedly. Then glancing up at the sky, he said with relief, "Any-way, clear night to-night; so he no come."

Tipshin's prophecy proved true. It was clear that night, and for two nights following. Close within doors, Jim talked with Tsuquanah, with difficulty steering him away from the terrifying topic of the tomanawas long enough to learn something of the killing of the fur seals. Tsuquanah never had witnessed the death of a seal for the simple reason that the raids upon the rookeries—two dots of islands in the bay before the village—happened always simultaneously with the visitations of the tomanawas upon dark and stormy nights only.

Tsuquanah recognized in the slaying of the seals no agency save the supernatural. Jim believed firmly that the Chinese were the marauders. How to catch them in the act was quite another matter. As a one man's job it was dangerous, almost impossible; and unless he could solve the tomanawas, a one man's job it was.

The second night being clear, Tsuquanah consented to put out with Jim and Tipshin in a canoe. The rookery rocks were covered with matkas, cow seals, and woolly headed pups. Here and there were lonely, unattached bachelors swinging their heads dolefully as if in sad contemplation of their benighted state. Out at sea, now and then, might be heard the bellow of a sikatch, a full grown bull.

Right off the bow of their canoe, an immense fellow came to the surface, threshed the water, emitted a defiant bellow, and dove after a luckless silver salmon. A full grown sikatch will weigh from four to six hundred pounds, a mature matka but seventy-five or eighty, an anomaly found possibly nowhere else in the animal kingdom.

Jim wanted to land on the rookery. "No," said Tsuquanah decisively. "No. Sikatch come, one, ten, maybe hundred. Where sikatch hauls in there he is beach master. He has maybe thirty, maybe hundred wives. No good to go there; a sikatch kills."

Nowhere was there a sign of the seal poachers.

Two nights later, a fitful ocean breeze brought in scurrying banks of clouds, with an occasional dash of rain. This would be the night. Every persuasion, every promise and guarantee of protection Jim brought forward; but the Quatsinos would not join him. Above the cabins had been heard the whine of the koosagh tomanawas, a low, ominous hum that rose to a screech.

In desperation Jim threw open the door, stepped into the open, bared his head, shook his fist at the banshee, threatened it, invited it to come down and do its worst. "See," he called mockingly to Tsuquanah, "the tomanawas is a coward even as Tsuquanah is a coward."

But it was no use. In every lodge a brave was making medicine.

Jim walked to the beach. More than once when the moaning cry sounded above, he was tempted to snap on the pocket flash, explore the air and learn if possible what manner of thing this tomanawas was. But he dared not. It was morally certain that sharp eyes watched from the Chinese houses. The flash might solve the mystery, but also it would warn the poachers and defeat his purpose.

Back and forth in the beating rain he walked. Shortly after midnight, the halibut boat landed at the Chinese wharf, and some bundles were carried up the slope. In the air was the smell of fresh blood. He dared make no closer approach to the house on account of the dogs. So he walked, walked and thought. Daybreak showed the beach with the freshly flayed carcasses of bachelor seals.

Swiftly, determinedly he laid his plans. Close within Tsuquanah's lodge he remained until shortly after noon when the halibut boat put out and turned to the eastward. At once he went to the house of Let Gee and boldly knocked.

San Chih, as she opened the door, ut-

tered a cry of alarm; her eyes widened with fear.

"No," she exclaimed ungraciously. "Go away from here. Yes, go."

She almost closed the door in his face.

The white man's features had grown pretty grim by the time he reached the lodge. He thoroughly oiled and cleaned the automatic, saw to it that the flash was in working trim. Again, a tedious period of waiting. With the fall of night and the turn of the tide came a gusty gale which whipped the bay into an uneasy, choppy sea.

Before he started forth, Jim called Tsuquanah to him and laid down the law. It was all but useless. Prison bars, even torture as an alternative, had no terror equal to the terror of the flying thing with claws. If Jim signaled for help, and if the tomanawas was not abroad, they would come.

The bay had become a waste of foam. With difficulty Jim launched a one man canoe. Once beyond the line of breaking wave crests, the craft rode staunch and true.

A sharp paddle of fifteen minutes brought him to the nearest rookery, an area of tumbled, gigantic boulders and riven granite covering possibly four or five acres. Selecting a hole in the rock bank which formed a diminutive bay with a beach stretch of thirty or forty feet, he entered and drew the canoe above tide.

From the top of the rock which arose from the beach, Jim was able to make out the whole rugged expanse of the island. Of the seal poachers thus far there was no sign. With a group of whimpering bachelors, and half a score of matkas and their cubs, Jim had the rookery to himself. From neither bachelors nor cows was danger to be apprehended, so the white man settled himself in a sheltering jut of rock and waited.

Presently, from afar, he heard the muffled exhaust of the halibuter; and shortly it appeared and swung in so close to Jim's hiding place that he could have tossed a pebble on board. Aft, by the net roll, half a dozen Chinese were busily engaged in flinging dead herring overboard.

Ah, there was the secret, in part at least. As unerringly as a bee to a flower would swim matkas, cubs, bachelors, sikatchs to snap up the floating fish.

Leaping from rock to rock, disregarding the whines and snarls of the disturbed seals, Jim crossed the rookery. In the offing he could hear the halibut boat extending into the open its decoy line of fish.

Ten minutes he waited, fifteen, speculating on what would be the next move. From the direction of the outermost rookery came the drone and whine of the tomanawas. In a moment it was repeated.

That settled it. Tsuquanah had agreed to put out in the big war canoe if Jim signalled, but only in the event that the tomanawas had not manifested itself. What perils lay ahead, he must face,—face alone.

The halibut boat was returning. In the offing sounded the bellow of a sikatch as it picked up the trail of floating fish. Another answered, and still another, all calling to their wives and cubs to come.

Neither cows, cubs nor bachelors heeded the cry. There came the sound of a terrific snapping and snarling among them on the rocks to Jim's right. Cautiously he crawled forward for a look. The beach was black with seals fighting over the loose fish, a quantity of which had been cast among the boulders by the Chinese.

The sikatchs, scenting the more abundant feast, bellowingly announced that they too were coming. The instant that the bulls arrived, the craven, half-grown bachelors would swim for their lives to the open where they would fall an easy prey to the poachers, who had only to steer their boat into the mass, knock them upon the heads and hoist the carcasses on deck.

Scrambling, falling, Jim fled across the rocks. Besides the smell of fish, a giant sikatch had scented also the hated man smell. With a roar, he "hauled in," scattering the bachelors to right and left, and went plunging up the steep.

Jim slid down the face of the boulder. With hands extended in the dark, he groped for the canoe, and failing to find it, turned on the flash. It was gone.

Added now to the din of bellowing bulls, which were coming in constantly augment-

ed numbers, was the thud, thud, marking the slaughter of the bachelors.

The sikatch which had climbed the rise, bellowed almost in Jim's face. He drew the automatic and fired. The seal dies easily, no matter what the size, and this great beast weighing over a quarter of a ton plunged down the declivity to the white man's feet.

In a minute, perhaps in seconds, other sikatchs would scent the hated man smell and come.

Frantically Jim sought among the rocks for a piece of log, a bit of drift that might serve to support his body in the water. There was nothing.

He drew the flashlight from his pocket, flashed it three times, then repeated the signal. From the Quatsino village came no answer.

The crunch and grind of tusks, the flapping of the cuadal fins, the mad bellowing—decidedly old Tsuquanah had known whereof he spoke.

In the magazine of the automatic were still nine shells, the lives, if his hand held steady, of nine bulls. Perhaps then upon the rock there were thrice nine, ten times nine.

Again he snapped the flashlight. No answer. He strained his eyes into the darkness. The clouds veered. There, on the beach, below the lodge of Tsuquanah, something was moving. Some one was struggling to thrust a canoe into the breakers.

The clouds thickened. With all his soul, Jim invoked the powers of light for just another glance. There, for an instant, he could see again. Some one had launched the canoe, but, with unskilled hand and feeble strength, had been beaten back into the combers. The canoe had capsized. Some one scrambled up the sands, ran along the beach, not toward the lodge of Tsuquanah, but toward the Chinese houses.

Thinking to evade momentarily, at least, the sharp senses of the sikatchs, Jim waded into the chill water arm-pit deep. There he stood, and waited, and listened. This would never do. He was getting numb. If he should topple over—

He had stood too long. His limbs refused their function. At the first step toward the shore he went down.

How he gained the beach, he never knew. The first impression that found access to his senses was a shout, a good, honest shout, the voice of old Chief Tsuquanah. He was in the stern of the big war canoe, with ten braves, and San Chih in the bow.

San Chih was crying softly, beating her small hands together passionately. She was the first out upon the beach; her arms the first to go about the exhausted man and offer their feeble strength to aid him.

Jim was lifted into the canoe. Just as it backed away under the vigorous strokes of the paddle men, there came overhead the droning of the tomanawas. But now, strangely enough, there was no panic. Instead the Indians shook their fists at the once terrible flying thing and laughed derisively.

"You look," said Tsuquanah. "Indian no fraid of tomanawas. Look."

Boastfully, as if he alone had solved the riddle, he held up to view one of the Chinese bamboo cages. It was empty.

"China girl she come run to Tsuquanah. No afraid of tomanawas, she say. Chinaman make tomanawas to scare Quatsinos. Look. It is little pigeon with bamboo whistle fastened to its tail. She let little bird fly away so we know it. Quatsino no 'fraid of tomanawas."

The war canoe headed for the open where showed the dim outlines of the halibut boat. Still could be heard the thump of the killing sticks. As the Indian boat drew nearer, Jim could see his missing canoe trailing astern.

San Chih, cowering beside Jim, began tugging at his wet sleeve. "No, no," she expostulated. "No. Let Gee will kill."

Before the Chinese were aware, the war canoe was alongside. Forgetting that he was supposed to have been invalided, Jim went over the rail with the Quatsinos, all of whom were armed with wicked knives.

In a few minutes it was all over. An Indian or two had gone to the deck under the impact of the killing sticks, and some Chinese had felt the nip of Quatsino steel. When Let Gee, who had surrendered without a struggle, saw San Chih sitting in the canoe, he drew a crooked-bladed, kris-like

dagger, and made a rush. Then it was that Jim had the ineffable satisfaction of bending an automatic over an Oriental skull.

In the pilot house of the halibuter were a dozen bamboo cages, all empty except one. In this were three homer pigeons with the bamboo tomanawas whistles still attached to their tail feathers.

Short shrift was granted the Chinese, all of whom were sentenced to Esquimalt Prison. Let Gee, seizing his opportunity for revenge, denounced San Chih upon the stand and related the manner in which her chock-chee, or immigration admittance papers had been secured. At once, San Chih was ordered deported to China.

She was a pathetic little figure upon the dock waiting the arrival of the Asiatic liner. Presently a fine appearing young white man came down the wharf and they began walking back and forth.

The five minute warning whistle blew. San Chih drew the glove from her right hand, placed the palm flat against the palm of the young man's right hand.

"Good bye," she said. "This is Chinese girl's kiss. Good bye."

"And this," he replied, flinging his arms about her, and gathering her to him, "is the white man's kiss."

Just before she mounted the gang plank, she pressed a tiny box into his hand. Then, without again turning her head, she boarded the boat, walked along the deck and entered her state room.

In the immigration office which adjoined the offices of the Seal Commission, Jim sought Yuan Gow, the interpreter, and handed him a ring of dull gold, with a character in enamel which looked like a "T" superimposed upon a deformed "Z."

"What does it mean, Yuan Gow?"

"All Chinese writing is pictures," said Gow. "This is the second obedience. It is a girl sitting beneath a roof where she waits, and waits always until he comes—the one she loves."

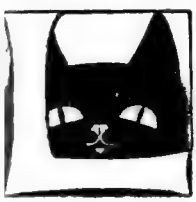
WHEN it comes to a study of the marriage question, readers will undoubtedly find the philosophy of "Auntie Miller" fully as entertaining and instructive as that of W. L. George. In the story, WHEN A MAN WEARIES *by Anna Brownell Dunaway,* we will again present "Auntie Miller" and "Henry," two characters who made their bow in "Every Man," the prize-winning story for September. WHEN A MAN WEARIES is a record of "Auntie Miller's" efforts as a matrimonial mediator. It will appear in the January number.

Another story for January will be THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE HILLS *by Chart Pitt.* Mr. Pitt is also the author of a previous prize-winning story, "The Law of the Abalone," which was published in July.

LANFRANC

BY E. A. COOK

There had been a flash within the tavern and the sound of a falling body, etc.; and now, the man who had done the shooting was sitting upon the bar, smoking a cigarette, instead of making a get-away.



ANFRANC was seated on the bar at McGill's tavern, smoking a cigarette. McGill had gone to the window and was looking out across the prairie. "There's some one coming this way," he aid. "Too far out to tell who he is."

Lanfranc waved the smoke away from efore his face. "You have not the eagle ye, McGill. I have seen him since he pass he Big Stone. It is Sergeant Mack."

McGill turned quickly. "That means you, hen," he said. "I told you they would get ord to the Post before morning. But ou are always so cocksure, you ouldn't start for the lower cut last night, s I wanted you to. But come on. Your orse is saddled. I fixed him up this morn- ig. Perhaps you can get off behind the idge, before he spots you. I'll hold him ere as long as I can and give you a chance ride for it."

McGill started for the side door, but see- ig that Lanfranc did not move, he faced round again. "Come on, man!" he cried. Good God! I don't want to see you ang."

Lanfranc calmly blew out a puff of noke. "I have seen fat men like you, who rink too much of the white wine, and sit own all the time, die, when they get too uch excite'. They choke all the same as hen they hang." And he laughed ironi- illy.

McGill grew red in the face. It is bad ough when you are trying to help a man ve his life to have him laugh at you for ur pains, but when he throws in a sneer your personal appearance, it is unbeara- e.

"Well, you can hang, and be damned," he snorted.

"Merci," replied Lanfranc. "But I t'ink you had better hide the whiskey that came las' night. Men do not hang for that, but I t'ink you not like to have Sergeant Mack fin' it."

McGill was already behind the bar, push- ing bottles labelled ginger-ale, syrup, etc., into more prominent positions, and gather- ing up several bottles of more suspicious appearance.

"I t'ink," went on Lanfranc, as McGill started for the side door, "you bes' stay out there for 'bout half hour. I'll try amuse the Sergeant."

McGill stopped with his hand on the door. "Look here, Lanfranc," he said, "I won't have any more shooting. It gives my place a bad name."

Lanfranc laughed. "Sacre! the good McGill. I'll be ver' careful of your good name."

Lanfranc was still smiling when Sergeant Mack opened the door, and he waved his hand gayly in greeting. "Has the Rider of the Law come to taste McGill's sweet- water?" he asked, throwing his thumb back over his shoulder at the row of bottles.

A flicker of a smile came over Sergeant Mack's face, as he caught sight of the ag- gressively innocent display. But it died away as he walked up to Lanfranc.

"No," he replied. "We will look after that some other time. I came after you."

Lanfranc's eyes met the Sergeant's inso- lently. "Bien," he said, "I am here, I am not like McGill' whiskey to run into the ground when the Rider of the Law pleases to ride this way."

Sergeant Mack did not appear to notice the irony of Lanfranc's tone. "Well," he said, "Are you ready to start?"

Lanfranc slipped swiftly off the bar. "Mon Ami," he said, "you are a damn brave man, yes! So when I say that I have the wish to speak to you for the time of a pipe first, I do not say I could kill you before you move you hand, if you say 'no.' I say: 'It is my wish,' and you——" Lanfranc finished with a wave of his hand.

Sergeant Mack knew that Lanfranc spoke the truth. Lanfranc could kill him as the lightning strikes, for the man's swiftness with his gun was a proverb on the plains. Yet it was not fear that made him nod his head in assent to Lanfranc's questioning gaze. He knew Lanfranc and liked him, as much as a man with his clear-cut idea of life could like a careless adventurer of Lanfranc's stamp. He knew also that Lanfranc would not have made such a request unless he had something important to tell, and although it was his place to execute and not to judge, there could be no harm in hearing what the man had to say.

The smile flashed out again in Lanfranc's face, when he saw the Sergeant nod his head.

"Bien, Mon Ami," he said, "Brave men do not kill each other without reason. Is it not so? Let us sit down." He led the way across the room to a long bench in front of the stove. Sergeant Mack seated himself across it, and Lanfranc faced him, politely offering him his tobacco. The Sergeant declined it. Lanfranc rolled a cigarette and lighted it.

"It is seven winters," he began, "since you and I were on the trail together, and much has happened. But, I t'ink, you know me well enough to know that Lanfranc is not what the good priest would call pious—no! I never go to the church. I have not confess since I was a boy. I play cards too much, and too good—perhaps. But no one has said to my face that I cheat—but once. They say I am too quick with my gun, as las' night. But no one can say that Lanfranc is a coward, or that he speak lies, or that he break the faith of the trail and the camp fire. No! And no one can say that he has seen Lanfranc drunk, or"—Lanfranc inhaled a deep draught of cigarette smoke and fastened his eyes on the Sergeant's face—"or, no one can say that Lanfranc has made life like hell for a wom No! He is not good, but he has live cle Is it not so, Mon Ami?"

Sergeant Mack nodded his head. La franc's vices and virtues were clear cut, a their possessor had stated them as th were.

Lanfranc threw away his cigarette. "I tience, Mon Ami. I will speak quick. T winters after we part at Lacolle, I go a place in the Great Hills. Hunting w good, and I like the place so well, I m t'ink I would build me a shack and stay the res' of my life. There was no o roun' but the Indians, 'cept one white m who had put up a cabin in a little pl where the wood open out on the hill, a a little brook come singing 'chur, ch chur,' down to the valley.

"The man call himself Burton,—and do not like him. He was made for t town, not for the forest. But he had girl——"

Lanfranc waved his hand at Serge Mack, who had half started up.

"Sit still! Yes! I know you have kno her, and she was like the wild flower, is not so? Great Bear had named her 'So Wind.' And it was a good name. Her sm was sof' like the spring, and her eyes w all the same as the blue flower, the S star, that came up under the snow. I ha never lof' any woman, and I not lof' h but I feel like a good man when she sm on me. I t'ink she see that Lanfranc was all bad, for she was ver' good to me. O when I twis' my foot in the snowshoe, a the pain was like hell, she fix it up in cloth with some salve. I think it was m the touch of her cool hand, but the pain

"Well, one day, when I come back fr the hunt, I bring a couple of pine chicks her. When I get to the cabin I fin' strange man there. He was good to l at, yes! But I not like his eyes. You tell mos' things from the eyes, if you kn when to look.

"He had some great plan to get gold fr the brook, and I see the father already the lust for riches in his face. They all the time by the water, and the girl and laugh with the stranger. I tell her day what I t'ink about him, but she la

THE BLACK CAT CLUB

THE five dollar prize winners in the September contest were: John Harmon, Los Angeles, Cal.; Mrs. Burr Porter, Duluth, Minn.; Miss Bessie Loesges, Riverside, Ill.; G. Lombard Kelly, Augusta, Ga.; and Warren E. Crane, Seattle, Wash. Anna Brownell Dunaway, author of *Every Man*, was the winner of the twenty-five dollar prize. Stories are criticised in the order of their standing in the contest.

Every Man is a playful satire illustrating the importance of becoming attire and the stupidity of slumping into careless habits in dress after winning a lover. It outlines a very simple though somewhat expensive course for reclaiming the affections of mankind in general, to whom love is often more an affection of the optics than the heart. The argument of the incident related is that brightness is more effective in eyes than in intellect and that a sheer rose-colored blouse at close quarters carries more weight than a substantial houseful of good furniture in prospect. The story is well told, and while there is no effort at withholding anything for the climax, the telling travels naturally from where it begins to where it stops; and the reader is not tempted at any point to skip and dive for a more absorbing scene. It contains two sparkling epigrams: "Almost any woman can get a husband, but can she keep him? That is the acid test." And, "Marriage brings out the cynical trait in women." This story, containing as it does much everyday philosophy, is decidedly the best drawn picture and the best balanced story in the September issue.

Ted and the Sorrels presents an interesting series of dramatic situations arising from the obstinacy of Ted and one of the sorrels, and the gregarious inclinations of Ted and the "other sorrel." Several of the incidents are lacking somewhat in plausibility, due largely to the almost human intelligence of the sorrel horse. This animal's humanization is almost uncanny at times, as when he blares back whenever Ted tries to ride him, when he selects the grave of Ted's friend for a rolling spot, and when he looks up at the young lady's window. For a wild horse to listen interestedly to his buster enemy's suggestion of a truce for the sake of a woman, represented at the moment only by a lighted window, and then to humble himself to bit, spur and quirt for a thirty mile dash across the flood-gashed prairie is something that might well be verified before a notary in advance of publication. The narrator admits that he may be making the horse too human by giving the reader his choice "as to whether the sorrel understood the girl needed him or that this man would master him by his will."

In the Name of Kentucky is an exposition of the American spirit in war time. A soldier risks reputation and life to whitewash the misdeeds of a traitor, simply because they were both from the same state. He accomplishes his task by killing the traitor and then giving him a record that the man himself would not have lifted a hand to deserve. It is a "told" story, but loses nothing on that account. The manner of the telling—the priest talking presumably in German and rendering here and there some unmistakable Americanism into the language of his hearers flavored with his own—is enjoyable, and the fact of his telling the tale to confront the German impression of American inertia is not by any means untimely.

The Death Mask is a plausible, humanly natural study of the extent to which an odd notion may become a grim and even dangerous obsession, when helped along by the coincidences that can always be found if the mind of the searcher is tuned for confirmation rather than investigation. An artist has made a collection of death masks; among them are two of murderers, whose crimes and respective expiations present certain weird resemblances. Fascinated by the discovery that his own head and features are almost identical with those of a man who murdered his sweetheart, and suffering mentally from overwork and the inevitable outcome of his own misdirected love affair, he nearly commits the same crime as his prototype, but has a flash of sanity just in time, and then needs no long study to regain his balance. The author holds his climax well for the close, and without ostentatious effort. The main theme—the victim's insistent grasping at mere coincidences and inability to see anything else—is handled with excellent restraint.

Beatty is an interesting character sketch that has for its central idea the fact of man's inborn ineptitude to complete the given task. The characterization of Beatty is good; we have met him in real life several times; in fact, as he looks out of the pages of this story, we recognize an old friend. He is always interesting, always an object of marvel, and never amounts to much. His fiancée is somewhat unusual, inasmuch as she is not piqued at Beatty's conduct as the ordinary girl would be. She understands it because she, too, is psychologist enough to know her Beatty. One might wish that she had not been too shortsighted to see the professor instead, for life in a toy house set in a toy waterscape would be a more substantial exist[illegible] than dependence upon the vagaries of

the sun, the wind and the wave. Had the wedding been postponed much longer, doubtless she would have found her mate in the professor in spite of her assertion that it would be "Beatty always." In that case, the desired reformation of Beatty would have gone by the board. The story is told in a highly pleasing manner, with the possible exception of an overdose of classical allusions and sophomoric slang, which clogs the progress of the story in many places. We are surprised by the gentle twist at the end of the story and are left with one impression at its close.

The plot, narration and character drawing of *The Nerve of Timid Thompson* are amusing, and there the virtues of the story cease. This is as it should be, for it is a story written with but one purpose, and that purpose is served when it gets a laugh from the reader. The scene in which Sloker and Timid Thompson sit on the bench and make love to Rebecca simultaneously is really humorous, while the arrival of the third claimant for the lady's hand gives the incident dramatic interest. The story is stronger from the standpoint of a character sketch than as a narrative. At the end, the information that Thompson knew the bomb was a fake comes as a mild surprise.

That chickens are gullible enough to swallow a baited hook, and that they are coveted by skunks as well as by chicken thieves, are well known poultry facts, but it took a clever weaver of story material to produce *Wardens of the Chaparral* from them, which the author did by adding new shuttles. In fact, he has an over-abundance of threads to his yarn, which results in a confusion of viewpoints, switched scenes, multiplicity of minor incidents, and a long time limit. There is, of course, no moral lesson except that the keeper of a roadhouse for motorists is apt to come honestly by his propensity toward brigandage; but the attitude of the police toward the pestiferous offender, Slaughter's habit of misdemeanor and his careful avoidance of felony, and the off-side but deciding comedy of the skunks, are all lifelike and diverting without absurdity in treatment. The author might have called his story "Saved by Skunks," but doubtless such an excellent title would never have seen the light of publication.

Ram Singh and Engel Sahib is a story in which the odorous East, the fatalistic Orient, and Central Europe's lower-strata brutality are mixed in an impressionistic paint pot, from which is dipped an excellent word picture. It is overbalanced perhaps by being one-third introduction, and with another introduction when the narrator drifts into the story-telling mood; but it is well told when it finally gets started.

The Thirteenth Contest comprises the stories in this issue, (December); and all lists must be received at the office of the BLACK CAT, Salem, Mass., before January 1st. Prizes will be awarded January 10th; and the result of the contest will be announced in the March BLACK CAT; issued February 15th.

A PRIZE of $25 will be awarded to the author of the story which is selected as the best story of the month by the largest number of club members.

A PRIZE of $10 will be awarded to the member sending in the best criticism.

A PRIZE of $5 will be awarded to the member sending in the next best criticism.

PRIZES of $2.50 EACH will be awarded to members whose criticisms rank third and fourth in the contest.

PRIZES of $1.00 EACH will be awarded to five other members whose criticisms are of sufficient merit to deserve reward.

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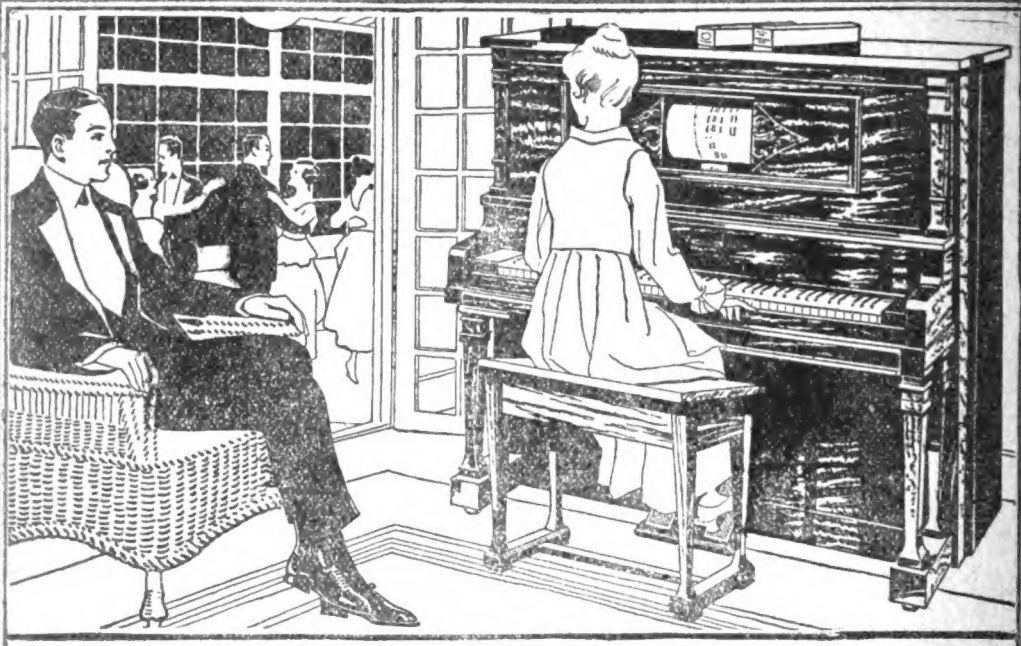

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at me. You know how those t'ings go—she t'ink all men as good as herself. One has to have a little piece of hell in him, before he see the bad in the res'!

"Well, one time I feel like a change, and I go on a long trip. I shoot much and see many strange t'ings and live as a man should live. But at las', I feel somet'ing tell me to turn roun' and go back. So I start on the back trail. One morning I see the smoke of a camp fire, and I fin' Great Bear and his tribe hunting buffalo.

"Great Bear, he tell me somet'ing about South Wind that make me strike him. But Great Bear know that I strike not him, but the words, and he give me two fresh horses, and tell me when I have done what I have to do, where I should fin' him, so that the blow might be wipe' out. Then we shake hands like men and I ride on.

"In t'ree day I ride what I would ride in seven at other time. When I reach the valley, I shoot one horse to put him out of pain. It was not nice, no! and it add a little grain to the devil that was in me.

"You have broke the stem of a wild-flower? Well, it was all the same. I t'ink she was glad to see me, but she was ver' weak. Her father was like mad, and he tell me that he try to get the priest from the new post, for the girl wish to have the blessing of the church. But the priest he shrug his shoulders and refuse to come.

"I take the two horses of Burton and go to the Post. The priest say 'No' again, but I say 'Yes!' and drop my hand on his shoulder. The good priest was fat like McGill, and not used to ride, so I strap him on the big horse. We come fas', and I t'ink he was sore, when we get to the valley, for he was ver' sof'! But we were in time, and I have no care but for that.

"The next day we bury her by the brook she lof', and I take my knife and make a cut on the handle of my gun. For what? I change t'ings about. One time in a mining camp a man who did not know me, show me his pistol handle. It was all cut with notches. He tell me he make a cut every time he kill a man. I t'ink he try to scare me. I laugh, for I do not like to see such men, and I say that the next cut he make in the handle I would kill him. For a minute he look as though he would shoot. Then he laugh as though I was mad. The next day he kill a young boy at a game of cards. I go to the place where he is, and remin' him of what I have said. That was the second time I have ever start a fight. Last night was the third.

"So I change t'ings about and make a cut on my pistol handle to show that I have *not* kill. For t'ree years I feel that cut and swear sof' to myself. I took many trails and I stay at many places, but the face I look for I did not see. Once a year I come here to McGill's, where the great trails to the North and West cross.

"Well, las' night, the place was full. You know how it is—much talk, much drink. Soon the door open and a man come in. He not see me, but I have no need of the white wine to make my blood run fas'. He laugh an' wave his hand at the crowd, and tell McGill to fill up the glasses.

"Everybody ver' glad to drink with the stranger, but I take my glass and spill it on the floor before McGill's dog. He see what I do, and he turn quick, 'Damn,' he say, 'for what you do that?' I laugh and point where the dog has turn away. 'I think I had rather drink with McGill's dog than with you,' I say, and I smile in his face.

"Men say I am too quick to shoot, but even las' night, I give him much time. He had his gun out before I draw. Then I draw quick, but I have no fear, for it was my time. It was fate. Then I cut the notch smooth on my pistol handle. See! It feel damn good."

Lanfranc laid the pistol down on the bench before the other man. Sergeant Mack's hand went out mechanically to the pistol and his fingers ran caressingly along the smooth cut in the wood.

Lanfranc's finger touched the back of the Sergeant's hand for a second. "Shall we go, Mon Ami?" he asked softly.

Sergeant Mack straightened up as if he were about to salute. "No, Lanfranc, damn it, no! I am more a man than this!"—and he touched the stripe on his sleeve.

Lanfranc's black eyes flashed with a brilliant smile. "You have the great heart, Mon Ami," he said simply. "I ride north tonight to keep the word with Great Bear."